UNDERSEA PRISONER By HARL VINCENT

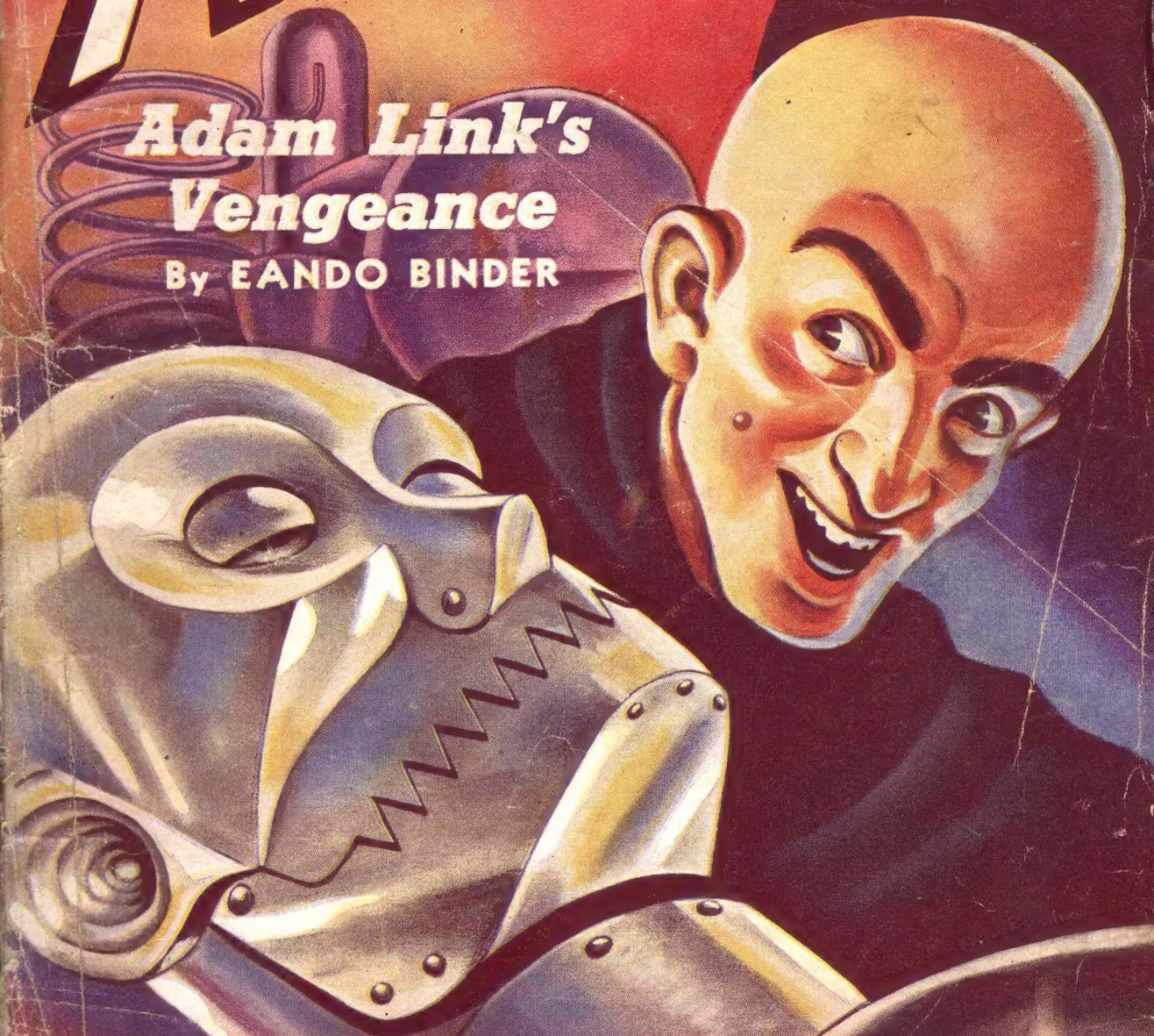
SEE BACK COVER

AMAZING STORIES

FEBRUARY • 20c

Adam Link's Vengeance

By EANDO BINDER



A SMASHING SCIENCE FICTION STORY OF TODAY'S WAR

ROCKETS OVER EUROPE

By ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

Better start gargling with Listerine, Mister!

WHEN you've got the sniffles, a chill, and your throat feels irritated, it's a sign that germs are probably at work in mouth and throat.

Sometimes they can be killed in sufficient numbers or kept under control so that Nature can halt the infection . . . throw off the cold.

If you have any symptoms of trouble, start gargling with full strength Listerine Antiseptic and keep it up. Countless people say it's a wonderful first aid and 8 years of scientific research back them up. Tests during this period actually showed fewer and milder colds for Listerine Antiseptic users . . . fewer sore throats, too.

Listerine Antiseptic reac
back on throat surfaces to
lions of the secondary in
germs that many author
help to complicate a cold a
it so troublesome.

Actual tests showed gerr
tions on mouth and throat
ranging to 96.7% even 15
after the Listerine Antisepti
Up to 80% one hour later.

In view of this evidence, d
think it is a wise precautio
Listerine Antiseptic systen
during fall, winter, and spring
when colds are a constant m
the health of the entire famil

Lambert Pharmacal Co., *St. Lo*

FOR COLDS AND SORE THROAT

NOTE HOW LISTERINE GARGLE REDUCED GE

The two drawings at left illustrate h
range in germ reductions on mouth an
surfaces in test cases before and after
Listerine Antiseptic. Fifteen minutes
gling, germ reductions up to 96.7% wer
and even one hour after, germs were
duced as much as 80%.

HE THOUGHT HE WAS LICKED—THEN A TIP GOT BILL A GOOD JOB!

MY RAISE DIDN'T COME THROUGH, MARY EVERYTHING LOOKS SO HOPELESS
IT ISN'T HOPELESS, BILL. WHY DON'T YOU TRY RADIO. TOM GREEN IS DOING WELL. TALK TO HIM
BILL, JUST MAILING THAT COUPON GAVE ME A QUICK START TO SUCCESS IN RADIO. MAIL THIS ONE TONIGHT. RADIO'S STILL A YOUNG GROWING FIELD
TOM'S RIGHT. AN UNTRAINED MAN HASN'T A CHANCE. I'M GOING TO TRAIN FOR RADIO TOO. IT'S TODAY'S FIELD OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR GOOD PAY
TRAINING AT HOME FOR RADIO IS PRACTICAL AND I'M GETTING ALONG FAST
SOON I CAN START FIXING RADIOS
THERE'S NO END TO THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WELL TRAINED TECHNICIANS
OR WORK ON LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEMS
OR GET A JOB IN A BROADCASTING STATION
YOU SURE KNOW RADIO. MY SET NEVER SOUNDED BETTER
THANKS! THAT'S $10 EXTRA I'VE MADE THIS WEEK IN SPARE TIME
OH BILL, IT'S WONDERFUL. YOU'VE GONE AHEAD SO FAST IN RADIO
I HAVE A GOOD FULL TIME JOB NOW—AND A BRIGHT FUTURE IN RADIO AND TELEVISION

I Trained These Men

Chief Operator Broadcasting Station

Before I completed your lessons, I obtained my Radio Broadcast Operator's license and immediately joined Station WMPC where I am now Chief Operator. HOLLIS F. HAYES, 327 Madison St., Lapeer, Michigan.

Service Manager for Four Stores

I was working in a garage when I enrolled with N. R. I. I am now Radio Service Manager for the M—— Furniture Co. for their four stores. JAMES E. RYAN, 119 Pebble Court, Fall River, Mass.

$10 a Week Extra in Spare Time

I am doing spare time Radio work, and I am averaging around $500 a year. Those extra dollars mean so much—the difference between just barely getting by and living comfortably. JOHN WANSHKO, 97 New Cranberry, Hazleton, Penna.

In U. S. Signal Corps

I am in the U. S. Army, Signal Corps, as Chief Radio Clerk. My duties also include maintenance of the transmitter and receivers when the Chief Radio Operator is absent. R. W. ANDERSON, Radio Station WTI, Vancouver Barracks, Washington.

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J. E. SMITH, President
Dept. 1KM, National Radio Institute
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1938
1939
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FEBRUARY
1940

AMAZING STORIES

VOLUME 14
NUMBER 2

Contents

STORIES

ADAM LINK'S VENGEANCE.....**by Eando Binder**..... 8
Adam Link faced the greatest tragedy of his career as he battled a giant robot rival to his power.

ROCKETS OVER EUROPE.....**by Robert Moore Williams**..... 28
What really happened at Friedrichshafen? Was it an incredible bit of science fiction come true?

UNDERSEA PRISONER.....**by Harl Vincent**..... 40
What good was vengeance and a confession when an undersea trap doomed you to death five miles down?

TRUTH IS A PLAGUE!.....**by David Wright O'Brien**..... 58
A liar is a hated man, but can he cause as much havoc as a whole city madly declaring the truth?

THE THIRTEENTH MR. TUMPS.....**by Richard O. Lewis**..... 76
T. Wilton Tumps loved his wife. But so did the thirteenth Mr. Tumps . . . and all the Tumps between!

SONS OF THE DELUGE.....**by Nelson S. Bond**..... 86
Inexorably the Deluge roared down, forcing Duke Callion and Joey Cox to fulfil an ancient legend.

FEATURES

The Observatory..... 7
Riddles of Science..... 57
Stations in Space.....122
Forecast.....130
Science Quiz.....131
Questions & Answers.....132
Monthly Merit Award.....133
Meet the Authors.....134
Discussions.....136
Fantastic Adventures.....137
Correspondence Corner.....141
Evolution Gone Mad.....145

Front cover painting by C. L. Hartman, depicting a scene from Adam Link's Vengeance
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Volume XIV
Number 2

A SUPER STORY OF A SUPERMAN!

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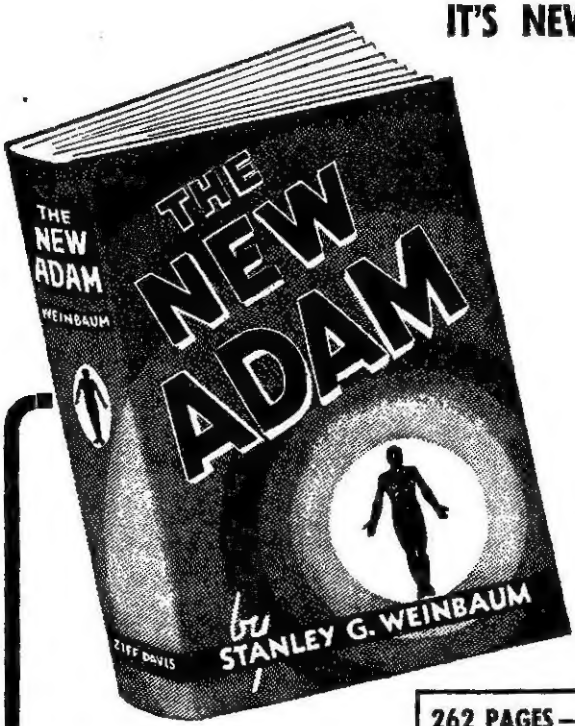

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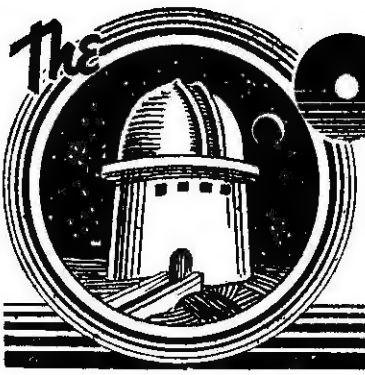
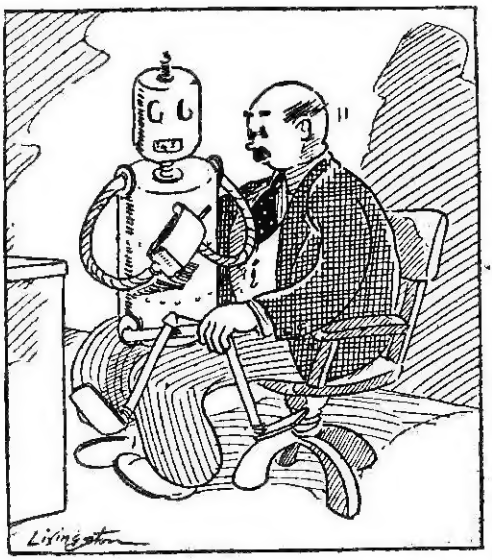


The OBSERVATORY by THE Editor

WHO is the most famous character ever to come out of *Amazing Stories?* Well, that's a question, but you'd be giving an excellent answer if you said: "Adam Link!" To your editor's mind this is one of the most amazing things he has ever run across. The fact that a metal man, a robot, (and how robots have been maligned in the past!) should become a dozen times more popular than a flesh and blood character, and assume an identity in the eyes of the readers so real that he becomes a real person, referred to by name by the readers, has set your editor back on his heels, and trying to figure it out. The secret lies, no doubt with Eando Binder, who has done what every author dreams of doing, given flesh to an illusion!

WHICH brings us to the fact that in this issue we have the best Adam Link story to date. If you don't thrill to the humanness,, the pathos, and the real significance of "Adam Link's Vengeance" we don't know a good story when we see one!

THIS modern war in Europe has done a lot to change the aspect of American pulp magazine fiction, and even in *Amazing Stories*, the magazine of the future, it makes its presence felt. Robert Moore Williams has written a sequel to a very popular story in our June 1939 issue. You may remember "Lundstret's Invention." Well, here's "Rockets Over Europe," and we don't know where Williams got his information, since he won't tell us. But the more we think about that mystery explosion at Friedrichshafen, the more we wonder just how true this story is. Perhaps when the war is over we will find that science fiction has come true under our very noses.



Alright, Miss Robota, you might just as well take a letter . . .

THE way the readers are receiving our new writers gladdens your editor's heart. Carl Selwyn who authored his first in *Amazing Stories* last month with "The Strange Death of Richard Sefton" is looking up in the voting. He'll be a contender. And Richard O. Lewis has been hitting high. Now he comes to us with a short humor yarn in this issue that ought to tickle your ribs. It's fantasy, pure and simple, and reminds us somehow of the famous Dr. Fosdick. "The Thirteenth Mr. Tumps" is our suggestion for your monthly laugh.

We won't say any more about the stories in this issue, beyond mentioning that Nelson S. Bond winds up his Deluge novel in fine style. And Harl Vincent does an undersea yarn in an excellent manner, with David Wright O'Brien bringing a story rather unusual to the pages of *Amazing Stories.*

SO many of our readers have asked for an authoritative article on rocket science that we've procured one from Willy Ley on one phase of the future of rocketry, and one that Mr. Ley declares is more important than the invention of rocket ships themselves, because he states that in order to leave the earth, rocket science will need to develop a more practical means of take-off. Read "Stations In Space."

ONE of our readers suggests that if the Earth, by some means, were slowed down in its rotation so that the days became longer, we might gain a lot more "time" to live. We don't just get how he means this, but we have a few views of our own, and are extremely interested in having a few more from our readers.

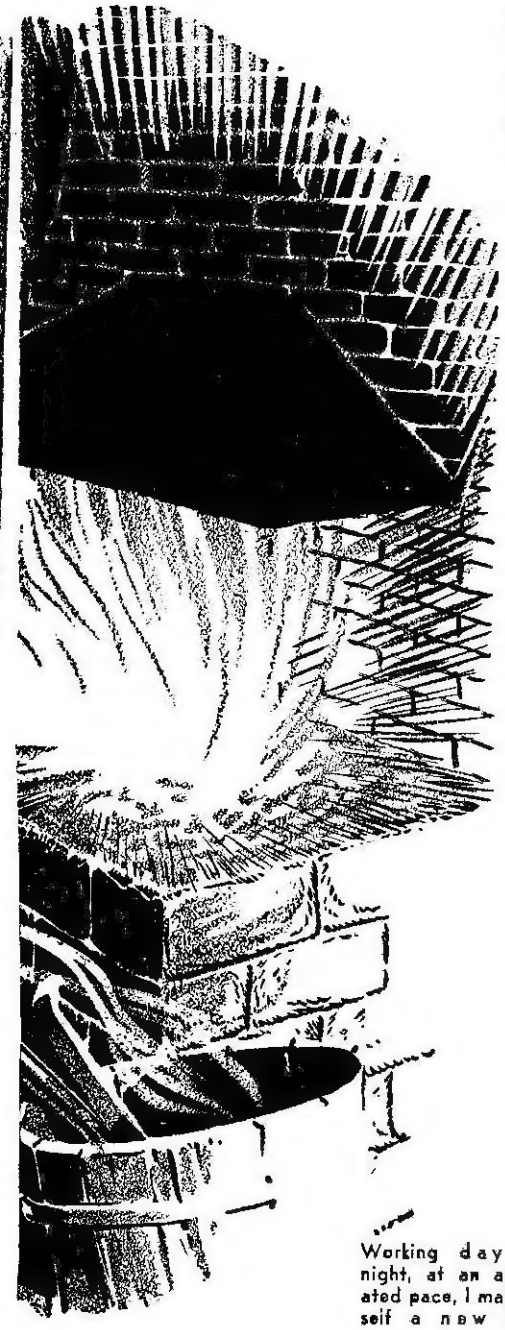
(Concluded on page 130)

Adam Link's

Vengeance

"If you are lonely," said Dr. Hillory, "why not make another robot, patterned after the woman you love?" And Adam Link agreed.

By EANDO BINDER



Working day and night, at an accelerated pace, I made myself a new body

TO any of you humans committing suicide, your last thought must be that death is after all so sweet and peaceful and desirable. Life is so cruel. And to be brought back from voluntary death at the last second must be a terribly painful experience.

So it was with me, though I am a robot.

My mind blinked back into consciousness. My mechanical brain was instantly alert. Full memory flooded back. What had happened to prevent my death? I had allowed my batteries to drain, and had lain myself flat to pass into oblivion with the last of the electrical energy. Over my head I had fixed a timed clockwork which would within an hour tip over a beaker of strong acid. I had removed my skull-piece so that the acid would bite deeply into my iridium-sponge brain and utterly destroy it.

Now I was alive again, feeling the strong pulse of electrical current surging through me. And the acid lay spattered over the stone floor beyond, hissing and bubbling. Someone had knocked it away at the last second. And had reconnected a battery to my central distributor.

All this passed through my mind in a

split second, after opening my eyes. Then I turned my head and saw my self-appointed rescuer, standing a few feet away, slowly shaking his head.

"Are you all right, Adam Link?" he queried.

"Why didn't you let me die in peace?" I said. My voice, in human terms, was a groan. "I have known a great hurt—this is not my world."

That was the irrevocable decision I had come to, a month before, after leaving the world of men. Kay Temple had proved that to me. She had made it clear that a robot mind, knowing of but lacking the capacity for human love, must live only in a terrible, bitter loneliness. Think of yourself the only human being on Mars, among utterly alien beings. Beings with intelligent minds, but strange bodies and strange customs. You would know true loneliness.

I had fled to my secret retreat in the Ozark mountains—fled from Kay. But I could not escape myself. My mind knew human emotion, too much of it. I was determined, at first, to weed that out—make myself truly a machine. I experimented with my brain, trying to burn out those unmachinelike things, but failed. I was doomed to remain a robot with human feelings.

Suicide was the only course left, so that with me would die the secret of the metal-brain. So that others of my kind would not be created and come to know the hurt I know—that this is not our world.

"Not your world?" returned my rescuer. "Your very existence in it makes you part of it. I'll help you up."

He came forward, tugging me to my feet, exactly with the manner of a solicitous person holding another who might be weak and spent. I needed no help, of course. I was not a starved, thin, haggard would-be suicide. With electrical current in me, I was immediately in full possession of my powers. I arose, shaking off his hand with a half-human petulance at his presence and interference in my life—or death.

I STARED at him, wondering how he had found me. This spot was remote from the haunts of men. Not one of my personal friends had known of it.

"I'm Dr. Paul Hillory," he introduced himself. He was a small, wizened man of late middle age, bald-headed as an egg. He had a certain sly look in his eye that I took for either humor or a cynical outlook such as comes, I suppose, from seeing much of life.

"I'm a scientist, retired. I have a small summer cabin a mile away. I saw you drive up here into the mountains like a demon, a month ago. In my next visit to the city, I heard the story of your trial and business venture, and sudden disappearance. I sought you out, but had some trouble finding this exact hideaway. I came just in time, it seems. I saw you lying on the floor, and then the clockwork began tipping the beaker of acid. I knocked it away with a rod. Then I took the battery from my car and connected it to your distributor. Your heart, by analogy. I realized I had brought you back from —death. It rather thrilled me."

I still stared at him, with an unvoiced question.

"I'd do the same for any wretch trying to take his own life," he responded rather sharply. His voice changed. A note of eagerness came in it. "You're a robot, Adam Link! A living, thinking creation of metal! I knew Dr. Link, your creator. I told him he was a fool to hope to succeed. Now I see he did. It —it amazes me!"

He sat down suddenly. Most people have known fear, or even panic at first seeing me. Dr. Hillory was too intel-

ligent to be frightened. But he was obviously shaken.

"You have brought me back to a life I renounced," my phonelike voice said dully. "But against my will." I told my story in brief, terse phrases.

Then, without another word, I stalked from the cabin. I strode along the path through the trees that sheltered the place from prying eyes. Beyond was a clearing of a hundred feet. It ended abruptly in a cliff, which dropped sheerly for five hundred feet, to hard rocks below. I would find my death down there.

Dr. Hillory had followed me. When he divined my purpose, he cried in protest and tugged at my arm. He might as well have tried to hold back a tractor. I didn't know he was there. He grasped my middle—and dragged along like a sack of feathers.

The cliff edge was now fifty feet away. I would keep right on walking. Suddenly he was running in front of me, pushing at me and talking.

"You can't do this, Adam Link!" he screeched. "You have the secret of the metal-brain. It must not go with you. Robots can be useful—"

He was talking to the wind. The cliff was twenty feet away.

Suddenly a gleam came into his eyes.

"You are lonely, Adam Link. You have no one like yourself to talk to, to share companionship. Well, you fool, why not make another robot?"

I stopped. Stopped dead at the brink of the cliff. I stared down five hundred feet at the shattering rocks below. Then I turned away; went back. Dr. Hillory had won.

HE stayed to help me. I had a completely equipped workshop and laboratory. Certain parts needed I ordered, through the devious channels I had thought necessary to my isolation, when I built the hideaway. Within a month, a second iridium-sponge brain lay in its head-case, on my workbench.

Dr. Link, my creator, had taken twenty years to build my complex metal brain. I duplicated the feat in a month. Dr. Link had had to devise every step from zero. I had only to follow his beaten path. As an added factor, I work and think with a rapidity unknown to you humans. And I work 24 hours a day.

The time had come to test the new metal-brain. Dr. Hillory was vastly nervous. And also strangely eager. His face at times annoyed me. I could not read behind it.

I paused when the electrical cord had been attached to the neck cable of the metal-brain head, resting with eyes closed on a porcelain slab.

"I had thought of this before, of course," I informed my companion. "Making a second metal-brain. But I had reasoned that it would come to life and know the bitter loneliness I knew. I did not think of her having my companionship, and I hers."

"Hers!"

Dr. Hillory was staring at me open-mouthed.

For a moment I myself was startled. I had given myself away, and somehow, before this elderly man, I felt embarrassed. I felt before him now like a teen-age youngster, experiencing his first love affair. In all except the actual fact, I blushed. Metal, fortunately, does not act like the thermometer of human faces, to human feelings.

But it was too late to hide what I meant from the canny scientist. Besides, he had to know sooner or later. I went on.

"When you stopped me at the cliff, you said why not make another robot? I had been thinking of Kay Temple at the moment. The picture of the robot

that leaped into my mind, then, was not one like myself. Not mentally. The outward form would not matter. I was 'brought up' from the masculine viewpoint. This robot-mind must be given the feminine outlook!"

My mechanical voice went down in tone.

"Her name will be—Eve!"

Dr. Hillory had recovered himself. "And how will you accomplish this miracle?" he said skeptically.

"Simply enough. She must be brought up in the presence of a woman. Her thought-processes, her entire outlook, will automatically be that of a woman. You must do this for me, Dr. Hillory. You are my friend. You must go to the city and see Kay Temple for me—now Mrs. Jack Hall. She is the only one who can make my plans come true. She must be the companion for—Eve!"

Dr. Hillory sat down, shaking his head a little dazedly. I could appreciate how he felt. Bringing a girl up here to teach a metal monster to be sweet, gentle-natured, feminine! Like trying to bring up a forest creature of lionlike build and strength to be a harmless, playful kitten! It was incongruous. Even I had my doubts. But I had equal determination.

"I suppose," he said, with a trace of the cynicism that lurked somewhere in his character, "that you will want your —Eve—to learn to giggle, like a schoolgirl!"

I didn't answer.

Instead, I switched on the electric current. Slowly I rheostated it up, to reach the point at which electrons would drum through the iridium-sponge brain, as thoughts drum in the human mind, under the forces of life. I watched, holding my breath—no, I have no breath. Sometimes I forget I am a metal man. But the idiom stands as descriptive of my feelings.

For what if the metal-brain were a failure? What if my brain was what it was by sheer accident, not the result of Dr. Link's creative genius? What if after all the process could not be repeated again—ever!

Loneliness! Death! Again my life would be wedged in maddeningly between those two words.

I held my breath, I repeat. I heard the hum of the electron-discharge, coursing through the metal-brain I hoped to bring to life. And then—movement! The eyelids of the head flicked open. The brain saw. The eyelids clicked shut again, as though the brain had been startled at what it saw. Then open and shut several more times, exactly as a human being might blink, awaking from some mysterious sleep.

"It's alive!" whispered Dr. Hillory. "The brain is alive, Adam Link! We've succeeded!"

I looked down at the blinking head. The eyes seemed to look into mine, wonderingly.

"Eve!" I murmured. "My Eve!"

CHAPTER II

"Educating" an Eve

WHEN we had completed the body, similar to mine but somewhat smaller, Dr. Hillory went to the city. He came back with Jack and Kay. They had come without question, immediately.

"Adam Link!" Jack called as soon as he stepped from his car. "Adam, old boy! We've been wondering and worrying about you. Why did you run off like that? Why didn't you get in touch with us sooner, you blithering idiot—"

Jack was just covering up his intense joy at seeing me, with those words. It was good to see him too, he who was my staunch friend and looked upon me more as a man than robot.

Kay came up. The air seemed to hush. We stared at each other, not speaking a word.

Something inside of me turned over. My heart—as real as the "heart" with which you humans love and yearn—stopped beating. I had fled from her, but had not escaped. It was plain, now. And Kay? What was she thinking, she who had such a short time ago seen me as a man behind the illusion of metal. A man she could love. . . .

Jack glanced from one to the other of us. "Say, what's the matter with you two? You're staring at each other as though you'd never met before. Kay—"

Jack of course didn't know. She had not told him; he would not understand. And my last letter to Jack had told a half-truth, that there could never be another man in Kay's life but Jack.

"Nothing, darling," Kay spoke. She took a deep breath, squeezing his arm. And then I saw how radiantly happy she was. It was an aura about her, like that of any newlywed. They had been married two months. I felt a surge of joy. Kay had found herself. And I would too, soon, in a companion like myself in outward form, and like Kay inwardly.

They agreed enthusiastically.

"I take credit for the idea originally," said Jack in mock boastfulness. "You remember once, Adam, that I suggested you make another robot, give it the feminine viewpoint, and you were automatically her lord and master!"

Kay touched my arm. "I'll try to make her a girl you can be proud of, Adam!"

"With you training her, that is assured," I returned, with more than mere gallantry.

"Well, let's get to work," said Dr. Hillory impatiently. He had stood by with a look in his face that seemed to say it was all rather foolish. "You two can use my cabin," he said to Jack and Kay. "It's only a mile away."

KAY came every morning, promptly. She would turn the switch on Eve's frontal plate that brought her to life and begin her "lessons."

Eve learned to walk and talk as rapidly—within a week—as I had under Dr. Link's expert guidance. Eve, no less than myself, had a brain that learned instantly and thereafter never forgot. Once she had learned to talk, the alphabet and reading came swiftly. Then, like myself, she was given books whose contents she absorbed in page-at-a-time television scanning. She passed from "babyhood" to "schoolhood" to mental "maturity" in the span of just weeks.

The other process was not quite so simple—instilling in her growing mind the feminine viewpoint. It might take months of diligent work on Kay's part, and would take all of her time, much to Jack's ill-concealed dislike.

I had put quite a bit of thought into the matter. At last I devised an instrument that shortened the process. An aluminum helmet, fitted over Kay's head, transferred her thoughts directly, over wires, to Eve. Thoughts are electrical in nature. I found the way to convert them into electrical impulses, like in a telephone. Fitted to the base of Eve's skull-piece was a vibrator whose brush-contacts touched the base of her brain. Kay's thoughts then set up an electro-vibration that modulated the electron flow of Eve's metal brain.

Mind transference. Telepathy. Call it what you will. Kay's mind poured over into the receptive Eve's. I knew that Eve would then be a second Kay, a mental twin. It was Kay's mind I appreciated from the first, in an emotion as close to human love as I can reach.

Dr. Hillory and I watched developments with all the avid curiosity of the scientific mind. But I watched with more than scientific interest. We left the whole job to Kay. We seldom talked with or even went near Eve, for fear of upsetting this strange process of giving a robot a feminine mind.

Once, in fact, I was annoyed to find Dr. Hillory talking to Eve. Kay had left for a moment. What he had said I don't know. I didn't want to question Eve and perhaps confuse her. But I pulled Dr. Hillory away, squeezing his arm with such force that he winced in pain.

"Keep away from her," I said bluntly.

Dr. Hillory said nothing, however. I began to wonder what to do about the scientist. But then I forgot about him, as the great moment neared.

THE great moment arrived.

Jack, Dr. Hillory and I were in the sitting room. Kay brought Eve in, leading her by the hand. Kay had assured me, that morning, that she had done all she could. Mentally matured, Eve was as much a "woman" in outlook, as I was a "man."

I'll never forget that scene.

Outwardly, of course, Eve was just a robot, composed of bright metal, standing on stiff alloy legs, her internal mechanism making the same jingling hum that mine did. But I tried to look beyond that. Tried to see in this second intelligent robot a psychic reaction as different from mine as a human female's from a human male's. Only in that would I be satisfied.

I was Pygmalion, watching breathlessly as his ivory statue came to life.

"This is Adam Link, Eve," Kay said gravely, in our first formal introduction. "He is a wonderful man. I'm sure you'll like him."

Ridiculous? You who read do not know the solemnity of that scene, the tense expectancy behind it. Jack, Kay and Hillory, as well as myself, had become vitally interested in the problem. The future of the intelligent robot might here be at stake. We all felt that. How nearly human, and manlike and womanlike, could metal life be made?

We talked, as a group.

The conversation was general. Eve was being introduced to her first "social" gathering. I was pleased to note how reserved she was, how polite and thoughtful in the most trivial exchange of words. Gradually, I became aware of her "character" and "personality." She was demure, but not meek. She was intelligent, but did not flaunt it. Deeper than that, she was sweet, loyal, sincere. She was lovely, by nature. She was—well, Kay.

"I'll be darned," Jack suddenly said, slapping his knee. "Eve, you're more Kay than Kay herself!" He grinned impishly at his wife. "Kay, how would you like a little trip to Reno?"

It was a splendid thing for Jack to say. He had made me feel human that way too, when I first met him. He had shaken hands with me in prison, and had me play poker with the "boys." But he wasn't merely making a gallant gesture, here with Eve. He meant it! We all laughed, of course. Yes, I laughed too, inside. And I knew that Kay laughed, for she pressed her folded hands together. Kay always did that when she laughed.

Something of the tense atmosphere was relieved. Our conversation became more natural. And before we knew it, Eve and I, sitting together, were absorbedly engaged in a tete-a-tete. What would two robots talk about, you wonder? Not about electrons, rivets, gears. But about human things. She told me she liked good books, and the beauties

of sunrise, and quiet moments of thought. I told her something of the world she hadn't seen.

It was then we noticed a queer phenomenon. Our conversation between ourselves gained in rapidity. Both of us thought and spoke instantaneously. Vaguely, I noticed that the others were looking at us in covert surprise. Our voices to them were an incoherent blur!

In the next few hours, Eve and I passed through what might have corresponded to days or weeks of human association.

Suddenly it happened.

"I love you, Adam!" Eve said.

I gasped, in human terms. My first reaction was one of astonishment. And I was a little repelled. It did not seem like a matured decision, rather a mere fancy of the moment on her part. Nor did I want her to say that simply because she knew I was the only other living robot on Earth. I had wanted her to say that only from the depths of her being, as human beings did when the mighty forces of love awakened.

"But Eve," I protested, speaking to her as to a child, "you hardly know me. And you have been—well, forward. Nor have I given you any indication that I wanted you to say such a thing!"

Eve's folded hands pressed together. She was laughing.

"Adam, you poor dear," she returned. "You've been saying you love me for the past half hour, in every manner short of words. I just wanted to end your suspense. I say it again, as I will to the end of time—I love you!"

And in a sudden blinding moment, I knew my dream had come true. I couldn't fathom how this girl-mind worked. She was—mystery. She was to me what women have been to men since the dawn—mystery. And in that, I knew I had succeeded.

Kay had caught on, somehow. She arose, tugging Jack by the hand. "We're not needed here any more. We're going back to the city. Dr. Hillory, you go back to your cabin for a while." Turning to us she said, smiling, "Get in touch with us soon, Adam and Eve."

And they were all three gone.

And we—the Adam and Eve of robots—looked into each other's eyes and knew that we had achieved a pinnacle of human relationship—love.

CHAPTER III

Happiness at Last?

A MONTH went by. I will draw the curtain over it, as is customary in your human affairs, when a man and woman adjust themselves to a new, dual life together. For the first time, in my sojourn among humans, I knew happiness. And Eve was radiantly happy, exactly as Kay in her new-found happiness with Jack.

We went to see Dr. Hillory finally, after that month. It would have been a strange sight to any human eyes, I suppose. Two robots, glinting in the sunlight, strolling hand in hand through the woods, chatting as merrily as a country boy and girl. A bird suddenly flew up and dashed itself against my chest-plate, blinded no doubt by the shine. It fell to the ground, stunned. Eve picked it up in her steel fingers, but with all the tenderness of a soft-hearted girl, and cuddled it to her. After a moment the bird recovered, chirped uncertainly, then flew away.

Dr. Hillory's cabin was only a mile away. He eyed us with his enigmatic expression.

"How are the honeymooners?" he grinned, with an innuendo that I didn't

like. But outside of that, he seemed pleased to note how perfectly Eve—his creation and mine—had turned out.

"I've been doing a little experimenting myself," he confided. "You remember I took Kay's trans-mind helmet along. It's a fascinating gadget. I made some improvements. In fact, I eliminated the wires—made it work on the radio principle. Want to try it, Adam?"

I complied. He unhinged the skull-section next to the base of my brain and set the vibrator in contact. He had another one made, so Eve also joined the experiment.

No wires led from the vibrators to Dr. Hillory's helmet. A little two-masted radio aerial at its top sent out impulses that sped through the ether instead.

"Do you hear me clearly, Adam Link?" came Dr. Hillory's voice in my brain. Yet his lips hadn't moved. His thought-words had directly modulated the electron-currents of my brain, reproducing the same thought-words.

"Yes," I returned, also by thought, since the system was a two-way contact. "This is rather clever but of what use—"

Dr. Hillory's mental voice burst in. "Adam, strike Eve on the frontal-plate with your fist!"

To my surprise, I instantly balled my fingers and clanged my metal fist against Eve's frontal plate. It didn't hurt her, of course. But Eve did a strange thing. With a short, frightened cry, she reached her hands behind her head, to rip the vibrator away.

"Stop, Eve!" commanded Dr. Hillory. "Put your hands down. Fold them in your lap."

She did. And she did not press them together; she wasn't laughing. I sensed that she was instead very, very frightened. As for myself, up till this moment, I was little more than startled at Dr. Hillory's commands, and his strange power over us.

"Adam!" Eve cried. "Don't you see? We're in his power—"

Lightning struck my brain. Instinctively I also raised my hands to rip away the little instrument that gave him such command over us.

"Stop, Adam! Put *your* hands in your lap!"

I FOUGHT. I strained with every steel muscle. But my machine's strength meant nothing. My hands dropped obediently.

Dr. Hillory was looking at us triumphantly. There blazed suddenly from behind his features the look of a man bent on evil designs. I had long suspected he was not a man to be trusted. Now he had revealed himself.

"Adam Link," he said gratingly, "your brain controls every cable and cog in your body. But your brain, in turn, is under *my* control. I am amazed at my own success. Obviously a command given by me, impinging on your electron-currents, is tantamount to a command given by yourself. Perhaps you can explain it better than I. But this is certain—I can do with you as I will!"

I tried speaking and found I could, as long as he had made no direct command against it.

"Let us free, Dr. Hillory. You have no right to keep up this control. We are minds, like yourself, with the right of liberty."

Dr. Hillory shook his head slowly. "No, Adam. You will stay under my domination—"

It was then I acted—or tried to. I tried to leap at him. A swift mental command from him—and I stopped short. Fighting an intangible force—fighting my own brain—I strained to

move on. Every muscle cable was taut. Every wheel in my body meshed for movement. Electrical energy lay ready to spring forth in a powerful flood. But the mental command did not come from my brain. Instead, slowly, my body inched back and finally eased with a grind of unlocking gears.

Hillory had won.

He stood before me, my master. I had the strength of ten men in one arm, the power of a mighty engine at my fingertips. I could in three seconds have taken his puny, soft body and torn it to bloody shreds. Yet there he stood, my master.

Hillory eased his caught breath, as though not sure himself up till then that he could stop me. Color came back into his face.

"I'm your master," he hissed. "And I have plans—"

Eve and I looked at each other helplessly. What evil plans did this man, so suddenly revealed in his true colors, have? A sadness radiated from Eve's eyes. Our late happiness had suddenly shattered like a fragile soap-bubble.

If I had any hope of breaking from Hillory's clutch, it was quickly dispelled. First he made us lie down, then removed our frontal-plates. It was simple for him to unhook the cables from the batteries that gave us life. We blinked out of consciousness.

When we regained our senses—it was like a dreamless sleep—we realized our true hopelessness. Hillory had welded the vibrators to the backs of our skull-pieces, so firmly that it would be impossible for us to tear them away with our fingers. Secondly, he had installed turn-off switches in the battery-circuit, so that we could be turned off when he desired. Eve's switch had been removed before, when she reached "maturity." Now it was back, this means of "turning off" our life.

"While I wear the helmet, you are under my command," the scientist said matter-of-factly. "Whenever I wish to take the helmet off, I simply turn you two off first. You cannot escape me, and you must do as I wish."

IN the following month, part of his plan unfolded. He forced me to devise a new and larger robot body. When the parts came, from factories, my fingers put them together, under his command.

Completed, the body stood eight feet high, without a head. It was a super-powerful mechanism, with muscle cables and cogs all proportionately larger than mine. Twice as much electrical power would be needed to run it. It was probably the upper limit in robot bodies, within the boundaries of flexibility, mobility and strength. Anything larger would have been clumsy. Anything stronger would have been too heavy to leave a useable margin.

Dr. Link had built my body as nearly in human proportion as possible. I stood five feet ten inches and weighed 300 pounds. This robot body was two feet higher and weighed 500 pounds. And when Hillory finally revealed his purpose, I screamed in protest.

"Put Eve's head on that robot body!" he had commanded.

"No!" I bellowed. "What monstrous motive have you behind all this—"

He let me rage on for a while. He did that once in a while, playing with me cat and mouse, knowing he had the upper hand. Eve pulled at my arm. "Please don't, dear!" she begged. "It's no use."

And it was no use. I quieted. Eve was turned off. Though it revolted me in every atom of my being, I unfastened her head-piece gently and attached it to the new body. I trembled doing it. Trembled with anguish. Though

changing bodies does not mean so much to a robot as it would to a human being, it is nevertheless a disagreeable thought. I had come to love every contour, every dent and scratch on Eve's former body. She would be strange to me, in the new one.

Finally every little wire had been connected, between her brain and the relay switches in the body's neck. Then I bolted the neck-piece in place, holding the head firmly. At the last, under Hillory's command, I snapped the back-switch.

With a creak and groan of new metal, the body arose. It towered above us both like a Goliath. I shed mental tears, and I could see the same in Eve's eyes as she looked down at me. This was as agonizing to us as to a human wife suddenly finding herself three feet taller than her husband. It was monstrous.

Hillory was ignoring our feelings, in this as in all previous things. Hopelessly, I tried to appeal to him.

"She's my mental mate," I said. "Don't you understand? She's my—wife! We have feelings. Please—"

The scientist laughed.

"Metal beings parading as humans," he spat out. "You, Adam, prating about loneliness, wanting a companion, mental love! It was sickening the day you and Eve talked of loving each other. That's all sentimental, twisted rot. Even among humans. You two, in the first place, are just metal beings. You have no rights, alongside humans. You were created by human hands. I'll show the world how to really use robots—as clever instruments!"

Instruments of what? What had he meant?

We soon found out. That very day, Hillory tested the range of his remote-control by radio. Eve, astride her new giant body, was sent step by step away, till she vanished in the woods. Still the scientist commanded her to move on, watching an instrument that recorded distance and control. Eve was sent a mile altogether, and came back obediently.

At no time, obviously, had she felt the slightest weakening of Hillory's remote-control, borne by high-frequency radio-waves. And radio-waves had a limitless range!

"You can easily be sent down to the city," Hillory remarked, pleased with the results. "Under my control, you can be made to do anything I want there."

"What are you planning, you devil?" I demanded.

A sly leer was my only answer.

THAT night, Eve was sent down to the city. Hillory was able to guide her easily enough, though she had never been there before. His mental commands told her every step. Conversely, her sharp comprehensive thoughts came back to him, whenever she was in doubt as to a road or turn. When she reached the city, in the dead of the night, Hillory read street signs through her and directed her footsteps. Svengali had never had the full, diabolical control over his Trilby that Hillory had over poor Eve!

At times, though the streets of the small city were nearly deserted at this hour, late wanderers spied the tall alien form. Eve involuntarily informed Hillory, and he would cause her to duck into shadowed doorways, or down alleys.

"This is perfect!" exulted Hillory to me. "I'm really there, by proxy. Through Eve, I can accomplish any deed within reason, without stirring a step from here!"

Eventually, Eve informed Hillory that she stood before a bank. Hillory

sent her to the back entrance, and after a guarded look around, told her to shoulder down the door without making unnecessary noise. Inside her keen mechanical eyesight picked her way to the vault. It was not a particularly sturdy vault. The bank was a small one.

Hillory gave an amazing order.

I heard all these through my mental contact with Hillory's helmet. He told Eve to pull open the vault door! Through Eve's involuntary thoughts, we could almost picture her tugging at the heavy metal door. Finally she braced her feet. The stupendous strength of her giant steel body exerted itself in one furious tug. There must have been a terrific grind of strained, breaking metal, as the vault lock cracked apart. Eve's great new hands had done a job that might have balked a blast of nitroglycerine.

Eve did not know what money was, but Hillory did. He had her stuff great packets of bills in a sack and hurry out. The whole episode was over in three minutes. Eve arrived back without mishap, the sack dangling over her shoulder.

Hillory had robbed a bank, without the slightest personal danger! Was that his purpose to amass ill-gotten wealth? He read my thought.

"No, Adam," he said suavely. "This is a matter of personal revenge. The President of the bank once refused me a loan!"

Which made his motive still more petty and unworthy. I looked at poor Eve. Her eyes were haunted. She knew she had been forced to do something wrong. Her Kay-mind told her that. She was miserable. But I was more miserable. I had brought her to life. I had not dashed myself to pieces, there at the cliff. On my soul—robot or not—rested the deed.

I tried to remonstrate with Hillory. He clicked us off, laughing, with little more regard for us than he would have had for cleverly trained dogs.

CHAPTER IV

A Horrible Slavery

THE following day, Hillory tuned the radio to the city's station. The news blared forth—

The Midcity Bank was mysteriously robbed last night. The thief or thieves broke down the back door and raided the vault, escaping with $20,000. The vault door did not seem to be blown down. It had apparently been forced open by some amazingly powerful lever or instrument. Police are puzzled.

They are investigating strange reports that a robot form was seen last night by several people, described as a huge one ten feet tall. Is it Adam Link, the intelligent robot, with a new body? Has he returned, after five months of mysterious absence, to commit this deed? Before he left, Adam Link was accepted almost with human status. Has he returned now to vindicate those who said he was a Frankenstein monster, dangerous to human life and property?

Frankenstein! Again that hideous allusion was springing up about me, when I had labored so hard to erase it in the minds of humans.

"You are ruining all my past efforts!" I accused Hillory. "I saved life, helped humans, showed that the intelligent robot would do good, not harm. Now you are destroying that—"

"Nothing of the sort," retorted Hillory evenly. "I have reasoned the matter out carefully. After perfecting my robot-control, and doing one or two other personal things, I'll take my plans to big business interests in New York.

The few little things that happen here won't matter. I'll sell you as a great new invention!"

He might have been speaking of a new type of radio, or automobile.

I tried to speak slowly, calmly in answer.

"You are making a frightful mistake, Hillory. When I came to life, and lived in the world a while, I saw the enormous difficulties of introducing robot-life. I saw from my own experiences that it would not be like introducing a new mechanical gadget. For I have a mind and feelings and human emotions. Human life is complicated enough, without adding another complex factor. Before the cliff there, I had made up my mind it was better for the secret of the metal-brain to vanish. Both for my sake and the world's. Foolishly, I let the thought of a companion robot sway me to stay in life. Yet perhaps the problem is not insoluble. But I tell you this, Dr. Hillory—I and I alone must decide! I alone, the Adam of intelligent robots, can find a way to introduce robot-life without creating future disaster!"

Hillory hardly heard.

"Rubbish! Your whole approach has been wrong. Who are you to tell humans what is best for them? You're no more than a clever mechanical toy, with pseudo-human reactions. I have figured out the way to introduce robots. Not as independent individuals who wander around in a half-human daze, looking for mental love. But as an organized, controlled force of workers, under the strict domination of their human creators and masters. As for your so-called 'feelings', they are spurious. Like a phonograph, you have learned to imitate the human things. You are no more than a clever mechanism."

He looked at Eve and me as one might look at a piece of prized furniture—impersonally.

"We are life!" I said doggedly. I wished at that moment that my metallic larynx did not sound so cold, so expressionless. It destroyed the meaning of my words. "Life is in the mind. We have minds. Dr. Link realized that. You must too—"

"Shut up!" roared Hillory in exasperation. "Why should I listen to your meaningless drivel?"

I was helpless to go on. He had commanded me to stop talking. He was master of every atom of my body. Eve and I looked at each other. She understood. The future of robots lay in my hand. But I was a pawn in Hillory's hands. The dread thought loomed before us—what would be the fate of our future kind? Of the robot—*race?* Slavery! We must have felt then like the Adam and Eve of Biblical history, denied Eden, foreseeing only misery and suffering for their people.

THE following night, Eve was again sent down to the city, like a metal zombie. This time Hillory directed her toward the residence section of town. She arrived at a certain house. She was sent quietly through a porch window. Hillory seemed to know the house thoroughly.

Then through a door. Hillory's cautious mental-commands to make no noise were probably carried out to the letter. Merely by leaning her great weight against a locked door, slowly but steadily, Eve could force the lock with little more than a clink of snapping parts. Apparently no one had heard. The metal housebreaker was not detected.

Then Hillory gave a command that made something inside of me go cold. He told Eve to strangle the man lying there in bed, asleep! Strangle him, kill

him! Hillory's psychic command was a ruthless, eager whisper. Powered by radio, the heartless command sped to Eve, and those great metal hands had no choice.

Eve came back with human blood on her hands. She kept looking at them.

"Adam, what have I done?" she said. Behind the flat, metallic tone was sheer anguish. Eve was a gentle humanlike girl, in a metal body, remember that. "He gave a cry—one cry. A horrible cry. It is awful to take human life—"

She had cried this out in a rush, before Hillory could command her to stop sniveling. Then she stared at me. I could feel her poor, dazed mind tottering. It was a brutal introduction to the mystery of life and death to her, she who was so much like the gentle, warm-hearted Kay. I wanted to rush to her, comfort her, as any human would rush to his loved one in distress. Hillory made me stay where I was.

"You're a fiend, Hillory!" I managed to say before he locked my voice. "Your heart is harder than the hardest steel of my body. You call us non-human beings. Yet you are less a human—" He stopped me then.

The next day the radio blared angrily.

"A brutal murder last night again brings up the thought of Adam Link, the robot. Police say the door had been forced by a strength greater than any man's. The body's neck was almost severed. Adam Link's strong metal fingers could do that—"

"What would they say if they knew it was *Eve* Link?" said Hillory, glancing at us with a sidelong look of mockery. "That man was a personal enemy; now he's out of the way. Ah, this is so perfect, perfect!"

I have heard it said that every human being has at least one enemy he would like to kill, if there were no consequences. Hillory had no consequences to fear. It was perfect, for him.

He went on. "But you are being blamed, Adam Link. The myth of the free-willed robot who can do only good is being destroyed. When you have been definitely branded the culprit, I will announce to the authorities that mental-control is the only way to handle the robot problem that has arisen before mankind. I am doing the world a service. I am giving it the great gift of robot-labor, in a safe sure way!"

HILLORY sent Eve out again the next night. His sly look told of some other hideous deed in mind. A man of his temperament and character had undoubtedly made many personal enemies.

A short time later, a car's motor and brakes sounded outside, and then its horn. Hillory glanced out of the window.

"Kay!" he breathed. But he seemed prepared.

Kay rushed in. She was alone. She glanced at us both.

"Adam!" she cried. "I had to come. Is there anything wrong? Where's Eve?"

"No, there is nothing wrong, Kay," I returned, but the words had been projected from Hillory's mind. I had no power to stop them, or utter words of my own. "Eve is all right. She just went out for a walk."

Kay heaved a tremulous sigh.

"Then all those ugly rumors are groundless, just as Jack said." Her voice held deep relief. "The robbery and murder naturally would be pinned on Adam Link, Jack said. People are like that. He said the criminals probably did things in such a way as to leave signs pointing to you. You're their perfect cover-up. I wanted to come up yesterday, but Jack said not to

disturb you and Eve until you called for us. But I was so worried that tonight I jumped in the car and came up, just to make sure everything is all right."

There was still a trace of doubt in her voice. She was staring at Hillory, and the queer helmet he wore.

"Adam and I were just finishing a little experiment," Hillory said easily

Kay turned to me again. "Then everything *is* all right?"

"Of course, Kay. It was nice of you to be concerned and come up, but why not come back some other time, when we aren't so busy?"

Hillory's words, of course, through my helpless brain and larynx by proxy. I strained to put in a note of warning, distress. But a robot's voice is in the first place devoid of human emotion.

But strangely, instead of taking the hint to go, she seemed curious over the experiment. She moved toward the control board of the helmet, connected to it by wires.

"This looks something like the helmet I used with Eve," she said.

I could see Hillory's impatience for her to go. But he could not afford to arouse her suspicions. He knew that she and Jack were much more my friends than they could ever be of Hillory. He began to describe the experiment in general, meaningless terms.

Suddenly Kay moved.

She moved with a swiftness and purpose that startled us both. Her hand grasped the switch cutting off current to the helmet. Hillory recovered and clutched at her wrist. With a furious effort, Kay opened the switch.

That was all that was needed.

CHAPTER V

Heartbreaking Combat

THE helmet went dead. I was no longer in Hillory's mental control. In two bounds I was before him. I grabbed the helmet from his head and flung it to the floor. Then I grasped his two shoulders in a vise-like grip and held him. I think if my face had shown any expression at that moment, I would have been grinning—but with no trace of humor.

Hillory's face had gone dead-white in fear. He squirmed and moaned in my adamant clutch, expecting immediate death.

Let me make a confession at this moment. For one split instant, with rage shaking every cell of my iridium-sponge brain, I thought of tearing Hillory's head from his body. But only for an unguarded instant. Then reason came to me. A robot must never kill a human, of his own free will. It was a thing I would never do. And a thing I will never let happen again—save for the deed poor Eve was driven to do.

I merely held Hillory firmly. To Kay I said: "Thanks, Kay. You've saved me—"

"I knew there was something wrong!" Her lips were quivering now, in reaction to the excitement. "I knew it couldn't be you, Adam that told me to go so brusquely. And Dr. Hillory is a poor actor." And Kay, I reflected, was an intelligent girl.

"What is this all about? What horrible—" Kay seemed about to go to pieces.

"Buck up!" I snapped. I told the story briefly. Then I instructed her to get a bottle of acid and apply it to the instrument welded on my skull-piece. A few minutes later the vibrator fell away. I was free entirely of the helmet control!

Not till then did I release Hillory. He staggered to a chair, mute and mortally frightened. The man who had been my master sat there now, a cowering wretch.

"Hillory—" I began.

There was an interruption, outside. The clank of metal feet sounded. Through the open door I could see Eve's body, glinting in moonlight. She had come back, also released from the mental control. She stood beside Kay's car, swaying on her feet, as though utterly dazed and lost.

I ran out.

"Eve!" I yelled. "We're free! Eve, dear—"

I suppose I felt at that moment as any man would, when he and his loved one are reunited after a deadly peril has passed. I extended my hand.

Eve took it, with a glad cry.

And then suddenly she yanked at my arm, throwing me to the ground. For an agonized moment I thought she had gone mad. Then, as her great body came at me I realized what had happened.

I leaped to my feet. A glance over my shoulder told me the situation. I saw within the open, lighted doorway of the cabin. Like a fool, I had forgotten about Hillory. He had picked up the helmet, turned on the power, and was fighting Kay off. Brutally, he crashed his fist against her chin and the girl toppled to the floor, knocked cold.

Hillory had no more control over me. But he did have over Eve!

Her great body came at me, under Hillory's command. Its mighty arms clutched for me, grabbed me, squeezed with machine-given power. My frontal plates groaned. I squirmed loose somehow, and staggered back. A stunning blow from Eve's powerful hand caught me at the side of the head. My left tympanum went dead, ruptured. I reeled.

"Eve!" I shouted. "Eve—don't"

But of course it was no use. It was not Eve who was attacking me. It was Hillory. And there we battled, Eve and I, two beings who loved one another but were battering at one another with the fury of giants. Eve was fighting to destroy me. I was fighting for my life.

I knew quickly that I had no chance. Eve's body was almost twice as heavy and powerful. I was slightly quicker in movement, and that alone saved me from almost instant destruction.

Mighty blows from her great fists thundered against my body. My return blows fell short. I danced out of her grasp. Those arms had crushing strength. I tried to flee. In three mighty strides Eve had caught up, knocked me off my feet. A powerful leg rained kicks at my fallen form, denting metal and endangering delicate mechanisms within. Then the great form jumped on me. Five hundred pounds crashed down on my chest. It was very nearly the fatal blow.

But I managed to roll aside, escaping the second such stroke, aimed at my head. Hillory wanted my brain crushed. He wanted to destroy me utterly, and have Eve left under his control.

The battle could not last much longer. Within seconds I would be crushed, broken, lifeless.

I did the only thing left. I ran—but this time to the cliff edge, where I had once nearly invited death. Eve's hands clutched at me, and then drew back. Hillory was willing to let me plunge over the cliff, and meet destruction five hundred feet below. I went over, dropping like a stone. . . .

THE fall seemed interminable.

It is said that you humans, when falling or drowning, see your whole life before your mind. I saw mine—not once but a hundred times. Every detail stood out with stark clarity. But one, livid thing stood out above all others—the thought of Eve, my beloved crea-

tion, remaining alive in the hands of a human fiend. . . .

Yet one part of my brain, as I fell, was cool and calculating. It kept track of my descent, counting off the feet and yards by that automatic sense of timing and measurement which is part of me.

A hundred feet to the ground! It announced that and then acted. It made my arms and legs flail, shifting my center of gravity. My body had turned head over heels four times in falling. But when I landed, it was squarely on my feet. To have landed on my head would have been immediate destruction.

I have instant reflexes. The moment my feet-plates touched ground, my leg-cables flexed, taking up as much of the shock as possible. It might be the margin to save me. The rest was a clash of grinding, bending, breaking metal that horrified my own ear. I had fallen on a patch of grassy ground, but with the force of a motorcycle hitting a stone wall at 300 miles an hour.

My mind swam out of a blur. One eye was wrecked and useless, but with the other I looked over my body. My legs were twisted, crumpled lumps that had been driven up into my pelvic region. One arm was broken completely off and lay twenty feet away. My frontal plates had split in half and now stuck half-way over my sunken head. Every cog, wire and wheel below my shoulders was scattered around in an area of more than fifty feet.

But I lived! I lived!

My brain was whole, though badly jolted. By a miracle, the battery cable to my head was intact. The battery was cracked, but working. I could move one arm slightly. I was little more than a battery, head and arm, but I lived! Fortunately, I knew no pain.

And thus I had played out my one slim chance. I had thrown myself over the cliff—but not as a suicide. I had hoped this miracle would happen. Up above, Hillory must be looking down. He must be seeing the faint patch of metal shining in the moonlight, unmoving. He would be certain of my utter destruction.

Perhaps now he would be turning away, ordering Eve inside. And there plotting his scheme of bringing to life a horde of mind-enslaved robots!

But I lived. . . .

I began crawling. Little more than a head, battery and arm, I began crawling alone. The stump of my arm dug into the soil, flexed, and moved me an inch at a time. Behind me trailed shreds and tags of metal, all that was left of my body. My steel backbone, to which was attached the battery case, head and arm, moved as a unit, but the rest was shreds. Hour after hour I crawled along, like some strange half-mangled slug that clung to life.

Yes, I knew agony. The shattering of my body meant nothing, but my brain itself ached. Some few crushed cells were warping my electron-currents, creating a sort of hammering static. It throbbed like the beat of a great hammer. I do not know what your human pain is. But I would have gladly exchanged any possible form of it for the crashes and thuds within my brain that seemed like the sledge-blows of a mountain-tall giant.

But worse than that "physical" agony was my mental torment.

What if the twisted cables and gears of my arm failed? What if the battery cracked wide open? What if a little bolt or wire slipped out of place? At any moment it might happen. And I would lie there, dead. Or paralyzed, awaiting death. And up there in my cabin-laboratory, Hillory, and poor Eve. . . .

But metal is sturdy. And Dr. Link

had built my body with care. I crawled all that night and the next day, through woods, meadows and stretches of boulder-strewn land. I knew where I was going, if I could get there. Twice humans passed near me. I lay still. They would probably destroy me, with the deeds of Hillory pinned on Adam Link. Once, reaching a brook, it took me an hour to figure a crossing. I could not risk water, for fear of a short-circuit. I nudged a log into the stream. It caught against rocks. I crawled across.

But I will not go into the nightmarish detail of that journey. Forty-eight hours later, again at night, I had crawled five miles. Before me lay a farmhouse, the nearest one, I had known, to my hideaway. It had a telephone.

CHAPTER VI

"Vengeance Is Mine!"

I REACHED the back door. Luckily, as with many unmolested farmer folk, it was unlocked. I made my way in and found the telephone, but it was on the wall out of my stunted reach. Working as soundlessly as I could, I pulled a chair over. From that perch, I was barely able to reach the phone. It was the old-fashioned hand-ringing type, still prevalent in that region.

With my one good hand I lifted the receiver, left it dangle, and rang the bell. A sleepy operator answered. I hurriedly gave the long-distance number in the city nearby. Jack's number. He had mentioned it to me during his visit.

I heard the ringing of the phone at the other end. I also heard a stir from one of the other rooms. Jack answered at the same time that a burly farmer appeared, snapping on the lights.

"Jack!" I yelled. "It's Adam Link! Come and get me! Trace this call—"

That was all I had time for. The farmer blazed away at me with a shotgun he carried. The first shot wrecked my arm, making me completely helpless. The second, by its concussion, tumbled me from my perch. I fell to the floor with a clatter and lay still. The farmer did not know what he had shot at, whether beast or nameless thing. He shut himself up in the next room, then, with his wailing family. I will never know what he thought of the whole thing.

Jack arrived within an hour, in his car and took me away, explaining to the farmer as incoherently as the farmer stammered his story. In the car were Kay and Tom Link.

Kay wept unashamedly.

"Adam! You're alive—thank God!"

I told my story briefly. Kay told hers. Hillory had released her, of course, after I was gone. Kay had returned to the city. In a red rage at Hillory, Jack had driven to his place, the next day—yesterday. He had not met Hillory, only the menacing form of Eve, who waved for him to leave. Hillory spoke, through Eve, saying he was preparing papers for patent, on the helmet-control of robots.

Back in the city, Jack had called Tom, who came by plane from the east. They had been discussing, when I called, some legal way to forestall Hillory.

Tom Link, my "cousin," looked at me sadly. "Meeting you this way hurts, Adam!" he said sincerely. "I didn't know you were in trouble." My last letter to him had not revealed my hideaway or purpose.

He went on grimly. "We must stop Hillory some way. We can try to pin the murder and robbery on him, with yourself as chief witness. You have legal status, since your trial, Adam. Failing in that, we can contest his patent,

or file counter-patent, or—"

Tom was vague, uncertain. It was a tricky situation. I thought of a court trial, which I had once sat through, and all the clumsy machinery of law. And I thought of Eve in Hillory's hands all that while, going mad perhaps. . . .

I think my voice must have startled them, as I broke in. Perhaps for once something of the burning emotion I felt reflected in my dead, mechanical tones.

"Vengeance," I said, "is mine!"

THREE days later, working day and night at an accelerated, driving pace, I had a new body. I was in Dr. Link's old workshop, my "birthplace." Tom had locked the place without removing its contents, for sentimental reasons. I had been created here, over a year before. Now a new Adam Link was replacing the old.

My new body was eight feet tall. Bringing me only as a living head, Tom and Jack had, under my instructions, connected me to a broken, partly dismantled robot body Dr. Link had first made for me, then discarded as not quite what he wanted. Working with this basis, I rebuilt the body piece by piece, strengthening, improving, employing greatly advanced mechanical principles.

At last it was done, and I prepared to leave.

Kay, Jack and Tom wore solemn faces. Within, I was solemn too. I knew what I had to do.

"I'll bring Hillory down alive," I promised grimly. "But before that—" I could not finish the thought.

Kay burst out into tears. She loved Eve too.

I left. I had told them to come up, if I did not return in twenty-four hours, with police. Hillory could be arrested for living on my property, already signed over to Jack and Kay. Perhaps then they might win a legal victory over him.

I WAS there at dawn. If I had thought to surprise Hillory asleep, I saw my mistake. Eve's form, sitting before the cabin, rose up mechanically, with a shout of alarm. Hillory had somehow rigged her up as a sentry.

The cabin door flew open and Hillory's bald head peered out. He saw me running up as fast as I could. His eyes popped. I must have seemed to him like a ghost from the dead—a robot's vengeful ghost.

But he darted back in, obviously to his helmet-control, and Eve's great form lumbered out to meet me. This I knew was inevitable, that I would have to battle Eve again.

"You escaped death somehow, Adam Link!" Eve's voice said. But I knew it was Hillory talking, through her. I had no way of telling whether he was perturbed or not. "I'll smash you completely this time, before my eyes!" he concluded defiantly.

I stopped ten feet before Eve's crouching, waiting form.

"Eve, listen. I know you can hear and understand." I went on rapidly. "I have to battle you, perhaps kill you! It is the only way. I must destroy you if I can, so that Hillory does not destroy me. Hillory must not be allowed to introduce robot-slaves. This is all torture to you, darling, I know. You are fighting me when you don't want to. And I will be bent on your destruction—even, if necessary, that of your brain. Your life! I love you, Eve. Forgive me—"

"Love!" scoffed the robot before me. For a moment I thought it was Eve. Then I knew it was Hillory, hearing my words, and mocking. "Mechanical puppets, both of you!"

And then we were battling.

HOW can I describe that battle? A battle between two metal titans, each with the ruthless machine-powered strength of dozens of men? It seemed unreal even to me.

We came together with a clang that resounded through the still mountain air like a cannon's roar. We locked arms, straining to throw each other. But now I was no longer at a disadvantage. We were equally matched. Two robots constructed for maximum power, speed and endurance. Unyielding metal against unyielding metal.

We looked into each other's eyes, told each other that though our bodies fought, our minds loved.

We broke apart. We came at each other with swinging arms. Mailed fists clanked against our adamant armors. The blows would have broken the back of an elephant. Within us, gears, cogs and wheels clashed in spurts and reverses as we weaved and danced around like boxers in a ring. We did not move as agilely as human boxers, however. The robot body must ever be inferior, in sheer efficiency, to nature's organic robots.

Suddenly my adversary—I no longer thought of her as Eve, but Hillory—stepped back, stooping. He shot forward in a football tackle, toppling me backward. Then, while I lay slightly stunned, he picked me up by heel and arm and flung me over his head. I landed with a metallic crash. The next second a huge boulder whizzed past my head. Then another . . . but I was dodging.

I was on my knees when he came at me, hammering at my skull-piece with his ponderous arms. I flung my arms up in protection. He sought to destroy my brain. Once that was crushed, my powerful body was senseless junk.

I lunged forward at his knees, hurling him to the ground with a thunderous crash. I had my chance then—a perfect chance to stamp my iron heel down on the head, crunching it. But I didn't. Eve's eyes stared at me.

The chance passed, as my enemy rolled away, swung erect. But I had been a fool. One blow and Eve would have known non-existence. It would have been sheer mercy, to save her from a living death. If the chance came again, I would not hesitate. . . .

I hardly know what went on in the following minutes. Once my enemy picked up a boulder that ten men could not have budged and hurled it at me like a bomb. I dodged but it scraped my side, tearing three rivets loose. Again, he locked his arms around me from the back and crunched them together so fiercely that metal screamed. But I heaved him over my back, breaking the hold.

We fought on, like two mad giants. Our colossal blows at one another would have felled the largest dinosaur of Earth's savage past. Our mechanical apparatus within began to feel the repeated shock. Parts were being strained to the breaking point. It couldn't go on forever. One of us would break down.

I had a dim hope that my enemy would first. Hillory had had to fight by proxy, from a distance. I had fought from a closer range. I had gotten more telling blows in. His inner mechanisms had received the most terrific jolting. It was his second battle. I had punched at the head as often as I could, jarring the brain within—even though it was Eve's.

I cannot describe the hollow ache that came with the thought of winning by killing Eve. But I had to win. I had to save the future robot race from slavery. And the human race, beyond that, from the eventual catastrophe of such a stupid course.

(Concluded on page 128)

There came a brilliant flare, a tremendous explosion . . .

EUROPE
RUMORS OF STRANGE BOMBARDMENT HEARD AGAIN NEAR BORDER
OCT. 19, 1939-AUP Dispatch
All quiet again last night on the Western front. Yet rumors persist that the strange artillery bombardment of two nights ago was repeated. This time, as the last, it was reported to have come over Alspach, near the border. Peasants swore that shells of small but tremendously powerful caliber fell last night.
Competent military observers who investigated the queer rumors of two days ago were at a loss to explain what was happening. Reconnaisance planes have repeatedly reported no enemy artillery. And then the strange shells fell with a luminous shower of sparks and gaseous trail behind each. In each instance, they exploded with roars that shook men from their feet, and only the complete withdrawal from the sector saved an entire battalion from annihilation.
The real mystery began with the finding of some "shell" fragments the next morning. Some of the "shells" were thirty inches in diameter!
Among the theories advanced was one which claimed that the "shells" were rockets fired from a great distance, and carrying huge loads of explosives.
Such a fantastic notion, it hardl needs to be pointed out, if true, migl spell the end of resistance in one bloo holocaust. Rockets

BY ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

MARTIN LANGLEY wiped his glasses. Regretfully he laid down the newspaper clipping which the somber young man had handed to him. (See clipping above.)

"You said that you think this is the strange new weapon which the current war has been expecting to see?" he said quietly.

"Perhaps. We know the 'rumors' are true. We have only our fears—"

The young man was in civilian clothes, but the straightness of his back and the square cut of his shoulders showed that he had worn a uniform at no far distant time. A faint pallor showed through the tan of his face. His eyes were heavy with tension.

Langley cleared his throat. "Lieutenant Andre," he said. "Naturally, of the army of—"

"Pardon me, Monsieur," the lieutenant interrupted. "I am here as a private citizen. I offer you this commission alone, for the moment. There is no need to mention my country. You must understand. We have had our experiences with espionage already."

Langley blinked. "Espionage! Not in America. There are no spies here."

The young officer smiled wanly. "I fear you are mistaken in that, Monsieur. One cannot be too careful, anywhere. However—" he shrugged. "—I did not come to you to talk of spies, but of this." He pointed again to the clipping on the desk. "You have not read this dispatch in your papers before today?"

Langley shook his head apologetically. "I fear I do not read the papers as much as I should. The war news sickens me. Fortunately, my work is rather engrossing—"

Langley could see how much his words had struck the young man.

"Yes, Monsieur. The war sickens us all." He paused a moment, and then went on doggedly. "You are a scientist and your work is your life. But the lives of millions of people may depend on work such as yours. It is for that reason that I have been sent to you. We need your help, Monsieur,—we need it badly. If truly these rockets are being used, a strange new disaster confronts an entire nation—perhaps two nations."

"My help." Langley spoke simply and quietly. He looked at the troubled young face before him and he could see the fear and uncertainty reflected in millions of other such young faces. They needed his help. "I don't know —" he began, then stopped.

The idea was momentarily perplexing. Langley had spent many years of his life experimenting with rockets, and the dream of his years of work was to build a rocket that would fly, a spaceship. He had seen the model of such a ship once, had seen it fly. The great Lundstret, his memory now sealed in death, had built that rocket, and its secret had gone to the grave with him. From then on Langley had known that his life would never be complete until he had built another such model. And now this young man from—he forced himself not to think of the officer's nationality—was offering him a chance to . . .

"What do you want me to do?" Langley said.

The Lieutenant took a deep breath. His eyes shown as he grasped Langley's hand and held it firmly for a moment. "Thank you, Monsieur Langley," he whispered. "With the great Martin Langley to help us, we will be victorious. We must fight destruction with destruction. Unless we can find a defense for this weapon, and our scientists have already told us they are powerless, we must repay the enemy in kind. The Dictator of our enemy will learn—"

Langley's face had gone white. "No," he said. *"No!"* He brushed a hand across his forehead. "My work is for peace, not for war. My country is neutral. And more than that, Lieutenant, I have been a pacifist all my life. You have asked the impossible."

"You do not understand! This war was forced on us—it is a war against the innocent. Soldiers are willing to die in battle, but this new weapon will go far beyond that. It can travel for hundreds of miles to kill women and chil-

This story is fiction. The editors have no desire to present ROCKETS OVER EUROPE in any other light. Yet, in view of the news that has come through the war censorship; remembering the mysterious blast of one of the belligerent's great airdromes; recalling other carefully veiled explosions—the reader may well ask—is this fiction?

The newspaper clipping that begins this story has had its counterparts in the daily press. One of the belligerents has often claimed a new weapon that would make for invincibility. Yet the war has not brought this weapon out . . . Or has it—and has that weapon failed?

What do you think?

dren who have already paid more than they can bear. We want the weapon only to show the enemy that if he uses it, he must also face its use by us."

Slowly Langley shook his head. "I am sorry," he said. "This war is not mine—"

It came through the great bay window behind both men, a thundering crash that beat them as if with physical force—an explosion rocking the house! Hurled off his feet by the murderous blast, Langley was thrown violently against a wall. He remembered the mortar dust flying up furiously, and the slow fall of bricks, and the way the whole ceiling overhead sagged. Then he was thinking vaguely of what the officer had said about spies. This then — After that it was as if some great hand had closed his eyes.

"THE doctor says you're to rest quietly." The young, white-clad nurse smiled down at Martin Langley.

Langley could see her through a clearing haze that seemed spread over his eyes. Almost as if he were focusing a camera, he finally made her out. The first words spoken were: "How is the Lieutenant?"

"He's all right. As soon as you're able to see him, he will be in."

Langley looked up at the ceiling. Slowly a strange anger had begun to burn within him with his returning consciousness. "DO you know what happened?" he said to the nurse.

She smiled comfortingly, but firmly. "You're to be quiet, Mr. Langley," she said.

Just then, Langley saw the tall, lean figure of the tall Lt. Andre come up behind the nurse. He was dressed in the uniform of his country now, and his face was half obliterated with heavy bandages. His left arm hung limply in a sling, but the other came up to his eyes in a smart salute as he stood over Langley's bed. For a moment it looked as if the nurse would take him away, but then looking at Langley and anticipating him before he could speak, she smiled and backed away.

"You are all right, Monsieur?" the young officer said anxiously, and then as if reassuring himself he said, "But of course you are. The doctors all told me that. I am leaving for my native country within the hour, and I came here to tell you how great my sorrow is that my visit has caused you so much misfortune—our enemy stops at nothing." He looked at Langley, his lips ashen. "Forgive me, Monsieur, I cannot express myself."

In that moment Martin Langley knew what he was going to do.

He was a strange man sometimes, even to himself. The quiet Langley could be roused to cold fury. Now an unsuspected savage gleam shone in his eyes. He sat up.

"If you'll wait until I get dressed, Lieutenant," he said, evenly and quietly, "I'll join you. That bomb drafted me."

Four days later, Martin Langley stepped out of a huge flying boat that had met him at the Azores; a fleet battle cruiser had taken him from a launch thirty miles off Sandy Hook and taken him to the airplane. And now Langley stood on alien soil.

SIX men were seated in the large room. Martin Langley looked about him at their determined faces. The room was heavy with cigarette smoke. Sheafs of papers lay on the huge, circular table. These several ranking officers of the Intelligence Corps were listening to Major Bruillard. The Major's voice was calm, but under it lay a grim expectancy. Death, by proxy, hovered over the room.

" . . . And we now know definitely

that the enemy is manufacturing these curious rocket shells in large numbers. Up to now they have probably been experimenting with them. Otherwise, a real attack. . . ." The Major paused. "They won't start their main attack until they have thousands of those rockets ready to launch at us. When they do start, it must not be too late. Our nation could be blown out of existence."

"All right," said Langley. "Show me what you have."

They took him to a laboratory, showed him the fragments. Bits of broken metal, iron, copper, empty half-shells—hints at the mechanism that operated the rockets, but only hints.

With Lieutenant Andre constantly beside him, Langley went to work. Within hours he knew the worst. The fragments were too broken to tell him anything about the mechanism of the rockets.

"I have to have one of those rockets," he said bluntly. "One that hasn't exploded."

"Impossible! We had hoped to be able to secure a dud, and our patrols are instructed to be constantly on the lookout, but no duds have come over."

"We'll make our own dud," Langley said. "Nets. Huge piles of excelsior, mud. Even high explosive shells frequently fail to explode when they strike a soft surface."

"But we're not certain these are contact explosives. They may be time shells."

"In that case," said Langley, "notify your army that all they can do is pray. . . ."

But the army of Andre's brothers were not ready for prayer. Whatever Langley asked for, he was given. His orders were listened to and carried out.

That night, some hundred hardy volunteers, rifles slung across their shoulders, came out of their concrete forts, their pillboxes, their dugouts, and began to create gigantic mud puddles, to raise huge piles of absorbent material, monstrous heaps of hastily cut shrubbery.

Near the little village that had been Alspach, where the rockets had fallen for several nights they went out into no-man's land. Langley went with them, and Andre accompanied him. The enemy ever alert and all-knowing, opened up with mortars, 105's, and machine guns, and men ducked into shell holes and men died. How many went to their death because of his order, Langley never knew, but his face grew as haggard as Andre's.

Then shortly after midnight, a handful of the strange rockets came, whining downward like monstrous starshells, trailing streaks of glowing light behind them, to burst with incredible explosions.

They fell close together, and the earth became a pockmarked wilderness. Still the men, those who lived, waited, standing near their nets.

Then just before dawn a final rocket came, like a glowing ghost whistling down the sky. Huddled in a shell hole in the darkness, Langley and Andre watched. The rocket roared to earth and they held their breath, waiting for the gigantic explosion. It never came.

The rocket had struck one of the mud puddles in the nets.

WHEN they dug it out, they, and the dozen soldiers who helped them were covered with mud from head to foot. The rocket was slick with it. More men were needed to carry it, and mysteriously, Andre brought them out of the gray dawn mist.

They got the rocket over a hill and out of sight of the enemy patrols just as the sun came up. They loaded it in a truck. Langley rode on one side and

Andre rode on the other, to keep it from rolling and possibly exploding. Neither let himself think of what would happen if that rocket exploded when they were so near it.

When they arrived safely at their laboratory, with explosives experts clustering thick around them, working with infinite care, they pulled the rocket's teeth. When that huge pile of high explosive powder was safely out of the laboratory, Langley suddenly found he was too weak to stand. He sat down and wiped the sweat from his face. Every muscle in his body was jerking as if it had a mind of its own.

"We've won!" Andre whispered between bloodless lips. "We've got one of those rockets. As soon as we understand its mechanism, we can make them ourselves. We've won, won, *won!*" He was almost shouting when he finished.

"Maybe," Langley said. "I have seen too many men die tonight to want any more of them dying from a machine of peace."

The laboratory was crowded. Experts in all lines, there to help. As he began to explore the mechanism of the rocket, Langley saw the anxiety on the faces of this people. It was the same way everywhere he had been, since landing. Among this people at war, those who knew were waiting—like men before a firing squad. . . .

Langley removed the housing that covered the rocket motor. He took one look and his heart almost stopped beating.

This—this was Lundstret's rocket design! Lundstret, who had built the Voyager and sent her off to the stars rather than let her fall into the wrong hands. Lundstret had died protecting a rocket model similar to this.

And Lundstret had died in vain! Somehow the dictator who had driven him from his country had secured the plans for the Voyager. Had she come back to earth, Langley wondered. If so, why hadn't the enemy built rocket ships, why wasn't he blasting across the sky, smashing all opposition? Or was that waiting for the immediate future to witness?

Langley shivered involuntarily with a new fear.

Then, studying the rocket, he saw what must have happened. The rocket was unbelievably crude. It was far from Lundstret's perfected mechanism. The enemy did not have a complete design of Lundstret's ship. The controls were entirely inadequate. In fact, there were scarcely any controls, the power being fed automatically.

Was it possible that the enemy had somewhere found some of Lundstret's old notes, which had enabled them to create this rocket. Certainly they had not found the Voyager. But they had the clue that would lead to perfected rocket flight, if they could carry it to its logical conclusion. Grimly, Langley wondered how long it would be. . . .

HE was aware of a stir in the men massed around him. Looking up, he saw a messenger coming through the crowd. Andre took the square of paper. As he read it, the blood drained from his face. "From headquarters," he whispered. "Our intelligence service reports that enemy big push is matter of days, possibly hours. Monsieur Langley, we've simply got to have these rockets to use in counter attacking."

Langley didn't answer. He had intended to say it was impossible, but he looked at their faces and the words would not come.

Langley knew it was hopeless from the start. True, they had a model. They knew how the rockets worked. But weeks would be required to adapt the machinery necessary to the con-

struction of the parts, to assemble the motors, and prepare the war-heads. They didn't have those weeks to spare. No one knew how long they had.

"We've got to have something else," Langley said bitterly. "We've got to find some way of—Well, why not?—of exploding these things as they come over — exploding before they strike earth."

"Is—is that possible?" Andre asked.

"We're going to make it possible!" Langley said quietly.

How he achieved what he did, Langley never fully understood. He had help, the best help the nation could provide, the cream of its scientific minds. Together they worked until they were ready to drop from exhaustion. They didn't drop. The constantly mounting tension, the constant fear—"When is the zero hour? When does the enemy big push start?"—drove them on.

And then they believed it was done.

Digging into the firing mechanism of that rocket, Langley found a hint. The rockets did not operate by ejecting gas at high velocity. They ejected what looked like light, but which Langley discovered was not really light, but was a modified force field, a space tension.

"Lord," he said. "Is it possible?"

What he had in his mind had to be possible. There was no time to test it. It had to work. The rockets came down in a shower of sparks and luminous light. The idea was to spot them quickly and hit them with enough force to explode them before they landed.

Langley called for searchlights, batteries of them, set his willing, if bewildered, helpers to dismantling them, to removing the electrodes. All day they labored, and all of the first night. Reports were coming in from headquarters, urging them to hurry. The enemy was concentrating large bodies of troops in attack positions, bringing up batteries of artillery, massing tanks. The rockets were coming over in larger numbers. During the first night, the rockets smashed a fort that had been regarded as impregnable. But the big push did not come that first night. It would come the second, or the third. *But it was coming.*

"Monsieur Langley—"

"We're doing our best," Langley answered. "Shut up and let us work."

By noon of the second day he improvised searchlights were moving up to the front. Did they have enough of them? Langley didn't know. Would they work, they asked Langley. He said they would.

A weak cheer went up when he made the announcement. His helpers were too tired for the cheer to be anything but weak and Langley was too tired to care whether they cheered or not.

The second night came. Langley did not go up to the front. He knew what would happen when the oncoming rockets met the beams from his strange searchlights. He crawled off into a corner and went to sleep. In his dreams a constant exulting echo sounded. "We've won, won, WON!" he did not see what happened up there where the massed men crouched in the darkness, waiting for hell to break loose.

Dimly he heard a voice calling to him, felt somebody tugging at his arm. He opened his eyes. Andre was bending over him. The lieutenant's face was splotched with a haggard grayness and his eyes were wild.

"Monsieur, monsieur, we've failed—failed!"

LANGLEY sat up. "Failed!" he echoed. "Didn't the rocket explode?"

"Yes, monsieur, the rockets exploded. But they had—" He tried to explain, but there was little meaning in his fum-

bled, over-emotional words.

"Take me up there and show me what happened," Langley said bruskly.

The weak dawn that marked the end of the second night was near when they reached the front lines.

Haggard men stood about, eying them desperately, saying nothing. Andre disappeared for a time, and when he returned, there was a company of twenty-five men with him. From out of nowhere many of the scientists with whom Langley had worked appeared: the word of the failure had taken them all from sleep, here in the bloody slime of the front.

"We'll have to feel our way into position, if you want to see the results," Andre said to Langley. "The territory where we had our force-beams . . . is . . . is now in enemy hands. Some of it is still no-man's land."

Vaguely, Langley nodded. He had to see.

The shelling had died down and there was little activity on the front. From the distance behind the enemy lines there came a low, unceasing rumble of motors and movement. The enemy was coming in, taking position.

Little by little the band of men edged forward, the scouts in front, signalling the rest forward. The earth was scarred and broken by huge pits. A machine gun coughed fitfully somewhere, then broke off. Somewhere, sharply through the still dawn, a rifle sang out.

"Here," said Andre, quietly, "was where we had a crew with a beam last night." Langley looked at ground that seemed to have been gone over as if by some great scythe. The whole area was depressed about two feet, and not the slightest vestige of life or machine had remained. "Last night the shells were enormous. When we exploded them in mid-air, their effect was just as horrible as when they had landed."

Langley did not answer. The sense of failure was overwhelming. The enemy was sending over even bigger rockets and even if he managed to extend the range of his improvised searchlight generators so they would explode the rockets five hundred feet in the air, it would not help. Showers of shrapnel would spray down, deadly fragments of metal. No force beam crew could stay in action.

Men could live only underground, and they could not operate the explosive searchlight beams from beneath the surface. When the big attack came, those rockets would not only be dropping on the front line forts, but would be passing overhead, searching out the supply depots in the rear, the lines of communication. They would be exploding over cities and a deadly rain of screaming metal would shower down. Non-combatants would die far back of the lines. A nation would perish.

Lundstret, that shy persecuted little genius, had made this invention. He had intended it for peaceful purposes, for the conquest of space, of the worlds across the sky. It was being used here on earth to destroy a country. Later, unless it was defeated, it would be used to attack other countries.

Langley stood there in No-Man's Land, his face a wrinkled mask of pain, not seeing, not hearing, just existing. Off to the left a machine gun opened up again, rattled viciously into silence. Far to the right there was the thump of a trench mortar. Overhead was the droning roar of airplane motors as reconnaisance planes went out into the dawn of death.

Lost in bitter thoughts, Langley did not hear the hiss of the lieutenant. He did hear a strange snap in the air very near him. The bullet did not hiss, it did not whistle; it snapped, like a whip.

"Enemy raiding party," Andre jerked

out. "See! Over there! A dozen of them. Quick! Into a shell hole. No time to get back to the forts."

HE ducked downward, jerking the dazed scientist with him. The air was suddenly alive with snapping sounds, the sharp bite of rifles. Langley fell face downward into the hole. Men fell on top of him. Somebody groaned. Rifles roared all around as the squad began firing.

Off to the left the machine gun opened again. Another joined it, and another, until the air quivered with the thuds. Another machine gun snarled. A third joined the first two. Searchlights stabbed through the dawning mist, winking on and off. Starshells flamed overhead, their white radiance showering downward. The whole front opened up as millions of men, waiting at their posts for the attack they knew was imminent — knowing everything but the hour when death would come— relieved the torture of anguished nerves by firing blindly toward enemy positions.

Langley had no rifle. Technically he was a non-combatant. But when one of the squad, firing over the top of the shell hole, suddenly ceased firing and slid downward, a grayish mass of blood and plasma oozing from a hole in his forehead, Langley grabbed his rifle. The barrel was still warm. He saw a figure in a gray uniform, squeezed the trigger. The figure slumped silently. As he slumped a brilliant flare and a rocking explosion roared just in front of the shell hole.

"Grenades!" Andre shouted. "They're throwing grenades. Watch closely. *Look out!"*

Another grenade burst, just to the left. Fragments of steel sang through the air. Dirt cascaded upward. Another came sailing over. It landed with a soft rattle—inside the shell hole.

"Throw it back at them!" Andre gasped. It was an unnecessary order. A private had already grabbed it, sent it whirling back. It exploded in the air.

Langley did not have time to realize how close that had been. A split second of delay in hurling that grenade back and—

He heard the rattle of sand again. Another grenade had landed, again inside the shell hole. For a fateful second men scrambled for it. Andre got it. He started to hurl it back and it exploded in his hand.

For a fearful second, while time stopped moving, the lieutenant's body stood erect. His right shoulder was gone, his face was a bloody pulp, blood was splashing from his throat, from his chest. He slid downward without a sound. He was dead long before he reached the ground.

The whole front seemed to explode in one hideous blast of sound as the guns in the forts let go, the field batteries back of the front, everything. The enemy patrol slid to the protection of shell holes. Langley, and what was left of the group that had gone out with him, stumbled back to the shelter of their own lines. Langley was sobbing. Tears were rolling down his face. He had seen a man die heroically, a man whom he had come to regard as a friend, as a comrade. And he had seen something else.

They thought he was crazy. They thought the things he had seen out there in No-Man's Land had snapped his mind. He told them one thing he had seen out there where men battled in the dawn. They were doubtful.

"Impossible!" they said.

"Impossible, hell!" he snarled. "Get out of my way. I've got work to do and damned little time in which to do it."

They caught a little of his will, did

these grim men who guarded the forts. They had been hopeless, waiting only for the end they knew was coming. But when they looked at Monsieur Langley, their hopes began to revive. A ragged cheer broke out. It grew in volume. They did not know exactly what they were cheering about. They did not clearly understand what this scientist had said he could do.

They had no idea how he could do it. But somehow, when everything was blackest, when the massed attack of all the enemy forces could not be farther away than one more dawn, he gave them a forlorn hope. And they cheered.

The thunder died along the front. Men took up their watchful waiting again.

THE day passed with no attack. Observation planes, flying over the front, reported that the enemy concentrations were complete. He was using every weapon at his command. Camouflaged batteries were hidden everywhere, waiting for the zero hour. Troops lay out of sight in every forest, in every bit of cover. The blunt noses of tanks were visible among the trees, fleet tanks, designed to work against infantry, heavy tanks, to crush machine gun nests. Far back of the lines planes waited on enemy landing fields. Long range artillery sought for the enemy batteries. Their fire was not answered —a sure sign that the attack was coming, and the enemy did not wish to disclose the position of his guns.

Somewhere, far back of the enemy lines, so far away that no airplane could find them, were the batteries that launched the rockets, sent them into the air. The enemy prepared all his offensive weapons, but these were the things he relied on to win for him. The allied forts could stand against his heavy guns; they had been designed to stand up under gun fire. But they had not been designed to withstand the tremendous impact of these rockets—tons of explosive would crumble the stoutest concrete, twist and smash the toughest steel.

The rockets would blast resistance out of the way. Reaching overhead, they would smash the civilian population in the rear. Troops, footsoldiers, the man with the knife in his hands, the man who in the final analysis wins and holds all battle gains, would pour through in floods where the rockets had blasted a way.

The dictator was confident. He had troops, artillery, planes. Most of all, he had his secret weapon. It had been thoroughly tested. Beyond the shadow of a doubt it would win for him.

Martin Langley worked. His force beams, to which he had adapted the rocket firing mechanisms, were changed radically. Crews placed them along the front. In the sectors where the enemy concentrations were heaviest, indicating the attack was to be strongest, the new crews and their weapons were placed in greatest numbers. Even then they were pitifully inadequate.

It was the best he could do, in the limited time. In putting even those few strange weapons into the field in the time he had, he achieved miracles with men and metal.

The third night came.

THE enemy lines were silent—until about midnight. Then the heavies began to mutter, the long range naval guns mounted on railroad cars. Great shells came over the lines, searching for the forts.

Langley was at field headquarters. There was nothing he could do now. Everything had been done. Now the test was coming. He could only wait the few hours that remained.

Until two o'clock the long range guns thundered. Then other, heavier explosion began to sound, like giant pigs grunting in the night.

"Those are the heavy mobile guns," Langley's aide explained. "They'll open with the howitzers next, the 155's."

Langley did not answer. They had given him this new aide to replace Lieutenant Andre. Langley had not learned his name. It did not matter. All that mattered was that growing thunder from the front, that increasing crescendo of fire, the baleful grunting and grumbling.

"When will they use their rockets?" Langley said, after a time.

"Just before dawn. The rockets will come over to smash the forts. They'll keep coming. Then the light artillery just back of the enemy lines will open up, to complete the wreckage caused by the rockets. Then the barrage will roll forward, and the first wave of troops will come."

The aide was shaking with a mad ague. "Oh, God, Monsieur Langley, will you be able to stop those rockets? If only—"

Langley sighed. "It is out of my hands now. We either win or lose, we live or die, by what has already been done."

The minutes dragged. The thunder of the guns grew louder, heavier. Hell was bursting up there at the front. The darkness began to dim in the east.

Then the rockets came. . . .

They were near enough to the front so they could see them coming, trailing great trails of fire as they arched downward through the fading night. They didn't move as fast as shells, didn't have to. They carried their own motive force with them and moved slow enough so that they were easily visible.

When they appeared in the sky, the mad clamor at headquarters ceased instantly. Telephones quit ringing, radio stopped buzzing, officers ceased giving commands. This was the moment when history was made, when destiny walked across the earth. Everyone knew it. The men, cowering in their dugouts knew it. The aviators, circling overhead in the dawn, knew it. The officers knew it only too well. Faces turned toward Langley, harried, hunted, panic-stricken faces. Men had seen death coming down across the sky. They looked at Langley.

Langley stood, his whole body hunched forward in the tension of that moment, his eyes wide, staring at the sky.

He saw the first rocket come winging down. It struck. STRUCK! The roar was like that of a volcano. It exploded with intolerable brilliance, square on a fort, blowing concrete and steel and men from the earth.

"Oh, God . . ." Langley whispered. "I've failed . . . failed again. . . ."

Around him voices echoed the word, muttered it, began to shriek it fiercely, men with death close upon them, men who were watching the first stroke that spelled the ruin of their country.

Another rocket came, winged slowly downward, flared intolerably. Langley shut his eyes. That second explosion broke his heart. The first failure meant nothing. But when two rockets came over—He sank to the ground, waiting, unconsciously for the third explosion.

It didn't come.

He waited, waited, waited. It didn't come. Then he heard the whispers around him, the startled voices of men crying out in awe, in wonder. He opened his eyes. What he saw lifted him to his feet.

The third rocket hadn't struck. A radiant beam, like the ray from a weak searchlight, had caught it when it was high in the air, had lifted it up, up, UP

—in a great arc, had turned it completely around, so that it was winging its way back toward the enemy lines.

How many men were watching that rocket, no one ever knew but everyone in that vicinity must have had his eyes glued on it, for when it described that arc in the air, and turned back toward the enemy, every gun in that vicinity stopped. Men stood paralyzed, watching the inconceivable happen.

Another rocket came. Again the light caught is, buoyed it up, lifted it, turned it, started it back toward the enemy who had launched it.

The first reports from reconnaissance plane came in. Far behind the lines, explosions had occurred — explosions that might have been shelling, or aerial bombings. But G.H.Q. knew there was no shelling and no bombing. It was the rockets, going home. . . .

That was the end. The guns became silent. But over that scarred and pitted land, once a great ringing shout lifted and hung in the still morning air, then it was quiet again. And presently, guns began to chatter, and little by little the full horror of the war as it had been before the rockets had come, was back again.

"A VICTORY that is not a victory." Langley spoke quietly. "Because of me the war will last longer."

"Would you kill off a nation to end killing?" said a Colonel. "Monsieur Langley, this war is not of our choice, believe me. And so long as war can be forced on a peaceful people, why should we not keep that war as harmless as possible?"

But these two men stood in the corner of a huge chamber, talking quietly, while around hundreds of voices buzzed. There were dozens looking at Langley eagerly, waiting for the chance to grasp his hand. In an adjoining room, preparations for a great dinner were going forward.

Langley had no answer for the Colonel. He looked around at the horde that was waiting to pour congratulations on him, and he felt sick again, in spite of everything. "I can't stay," he faltered.

"But Monsieur, we owe you—"

"You owe me nothing. Thank, instead, the memory of your countryman, Lieutenant Andre, who showed me what to do, and died showing me. When he threw back the grenades, I had my answer. I knew then that we had to return the rockets. Your enemy had to learn that whenever they used one of the instruments that Lundstret had invented for peace, that it would come back to destroy them.

"The field force that I used had to be softened. It had to ease the rocket, catch it, and at the same instant, spin it around and send it back along the same arc from which it had come. You have the defense now. I will never explain its mechanism. God alone knows how long this war will last, and to what temptations even the most peaceful people may yet be driven.

"But if you want to thank me, thank me with a just peace. When the day for peace comes, remember Lundstret, who died to save his invention from being used as instrument of war. And on that day, be just and be honorable."

The Colonel bowed slowly, extended a hand to meet Langley's.

Then Langley was walking quickly from the room.

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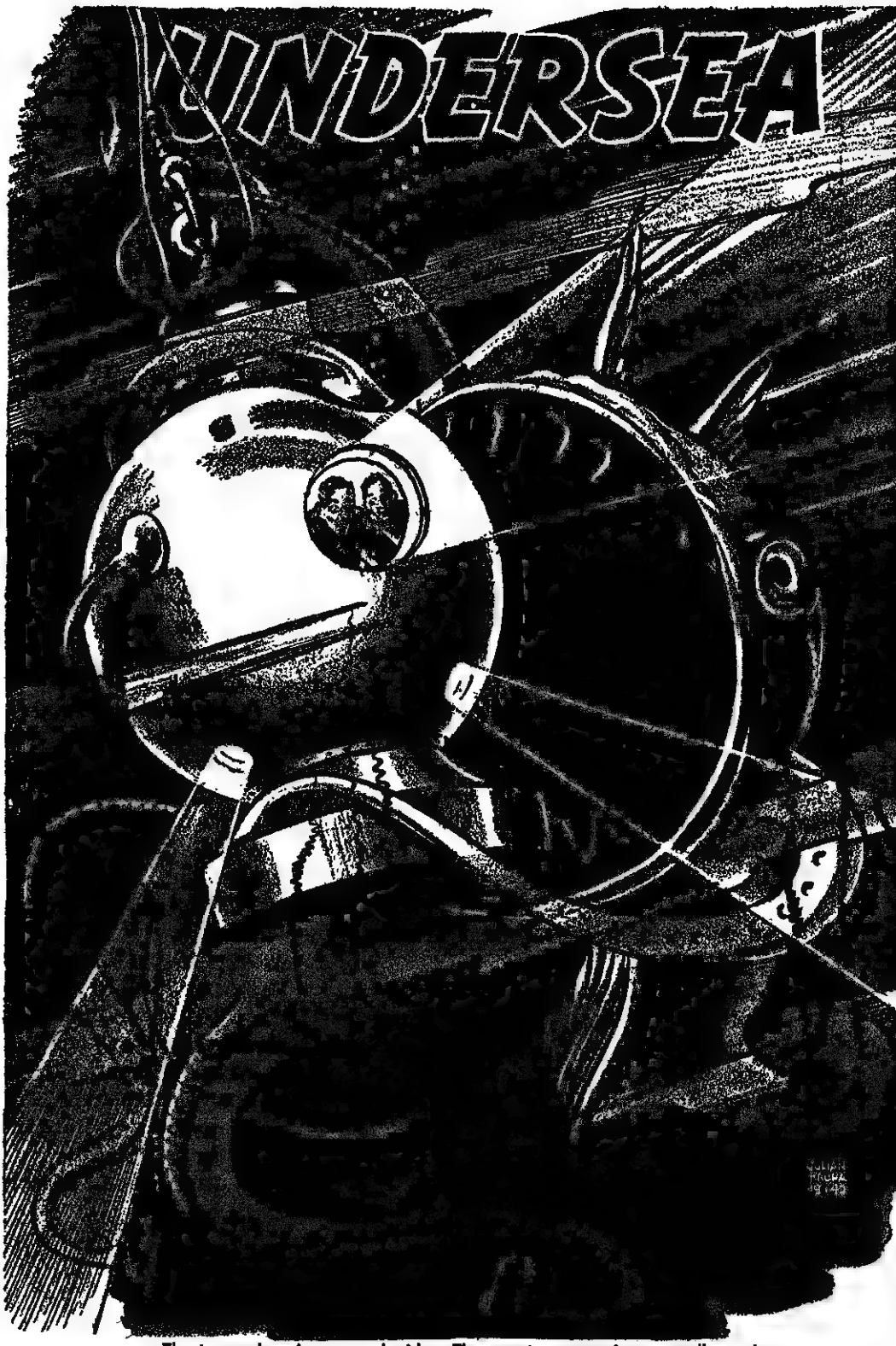


The tremendous jaws gaped wide. The monster was going to swallow us!

PRISONER

By Harl Vincent

Richard Burke chose the chance of death in the deep, so that he could force a confession from the man who framed him.

"RICHARD BURKE, I sentence you to confinement in Attica Prison for a period of not less than ten nor more than twenty years. . . ."

It would have been longer if he'd been a second offender or if they could have shown a motive for the killing of which he was accused. They couldn't show that. Kill Jack Van den Broek, the best friend he'd ever had? Impossible. But the jury had thought otherwise. There was circumstantial evidence that looked perfect. Alibis that seemingly broke down. And Burke was morally certain, knowing that the evidence had been planted, that Francis Augustine had somehow been at the bottom of his framing. The great Professor Augustine, for whom Dick had long worked, who had so many times . . . well, he just had the hunch, put it that way.

For which reason, he had engineered his plans through Slim Curran. And now he was waiting for the reply to his application.

Burke had a good friend in Slim Curran, one of the Sheriff's finer deputies. Slim had pulled some wires on the outside in Burke's behalf, otherwise, he'd have long since been on his way to Attica and already starting his ten to twenty bit.

Waiting in growing animosity toward Augustine, and in a state of nerves that was rapidly coming to the snapping point. Suppose the Court refused his application!

Burke wasn't the first, nor would he be the last man to suffer for the crime of another. He couldn't prove his innocence. He had but one hope now. In these days, where evidence was purely circumstantial, there were the chances for alternative sentences. In the interest of science, or rather in the interest of the scientists who were coming to be such a factor in all branches of government and jurisprudence. And one such possible alternative would give Burke his chance to get close to Augustine, might even enable him to go further. . . .

This was the Augustine Undersea Balloon, which was to descend six miles in the ocean in a couple of weeks. And in which would descend as observers two convicts who, thereby, would satisfy their sentences in full. None of Augustine's devices had returned from depths greater than two miles. But Burke was not concerned with that; he only wanted to get near to the man he

was sure had framed him. And Augustine couldn't prevent that, once his application was approved.

Whether or not he ever came up from the depths made no difference. To rot in the Big House would be worse. He knew Augustine, knew his influence, and felt certain that the man would see to it that he served his full time once he was sent away. By the same token, he knew that the professor, once he learned to his chagrin who was going down in his machine—if Burke could make the grade—would find some means of making sure he never came back alive. Augustine was full of dirty tricks. In the meantime, though, Burke would have a chance at him himself, some sort of chance. . . .

Days passed. He had about given up hope when there was a shout from the main gate of the gallery: "Burke—going out! Get everything together. Going out!"

Going out? Burke was going *down*. His pulses raced with the excitement of the thought.

HE had never thought much of these undersea contrivances of Augustine's. They were developments of the free balloon first proposed some seventy years previously by the more famous professor, Auguste Piccard. Strange, the slight similarity in names. The things had been an expensive hobby with Augustine; several had been built and tested. Two had never returned from the mysterious deep. The one which had at last come up to bob alongside the mother ship brought with it two madmen, two utterly crazed young scientists who were never able to discuss their adventure. Only their films were of value and even these recorded nothing beyond the two mile depth.

Augustine, unlike the originator of the underwater free balloon and one of the first to make stratosphere balloon flights, had never had the courage to go down in one of his own contraptions. The new Alternative Sentence Law was a help to him.

Burke's companion-to-be was Thaddeus Zybyski, a former radio man who had done three years of a life sentence in Sing Sing. Through some underworld connections he had somehow managed this alternative. He was a confessed kidnaper. Of a five year old baby, who had died on his hands! Burke was forced to occupy the same cell with the man on the ship that was to take them to the scene of the descent. The kidnaper, a surly and murderous-looking brute, insisted on being called Teddy. And Teddy was getting cold feet.

"I'm damn near tempted to back out," he told Burke on their second day out. "Hell, it's an easy life in the radio room up the river. So what the hell? The boys may make a break one of these days. And the hacks aren't so bad anyway. This way it's curtains sure. We'll never come up in that thing."

Which gave Burke an idea. He eyed the big man contemplatively. Teddy was about Augustine's build, same bulky frame, same paunchy jowls. If it weren't for the prison pallor, his lockstep gait and the absence of the square black mustache, he could easily pass for the scheming professor.

"Maybe we can rig up that break right here," he suggested to Teddy.

"A getaway! From here? You're nuts. What do you think the two hacks came along from Sing Sing for? To see damn well I get in that machine and am properly sunk. Same as the two screws that came with you. Hell, they aren't giving us any breaks."

"I still think you might make it," Burke insisted. "Not me. I'm in this

to stay. But you can get away with it."

"How?" The con was impressed.

Burke started outlining his plot.

AT length there came the time when the whine of the atomic motors slowed and finally stopped. The ship was rolling and pitching without headway in deep water. "Too damn deep for me," growled Teddy. He and Burke were herded up on deck by the four guards. The professor greeted them unctuously, rubbing his pudgy hands together and showing tobacco-stained teeth beneath his square mustache. He wore sun goggles, which was a break Burke hadn't anticipated.

"Well, my hearties," he offered. "Ready for the plunge?"

"Sure we're ready," rasped Teddy. "How else could we be?"

Burke made no comment.

The car, suspended a few feet above the deck from the boom of a derrick, seemed huge viewed from nearby. It was a gleaming sphere of eighteen feet diameter, with three heavy conical ballast weights on its underside and with six broad vertical fins spaced around its circumference to keep its inner floor level when in the water. The ballast cones, Burke knew, could be unlatched from inside when it was desired to return to the surface. Provided the latches hadn't been tampered with. . . .

From sturdy steel eyes on the top of the sphere, a dozen steel cables draped over the ship's rail and looped down to the wire net that enclosed the balloon.*

Augustine turned to the guards. "It's all right, boys," he assured them, patting his hip. "I want to take them inside. There's only room for three inside. But I'm armed."

Burke saw from the corner of his eye that the professor's amphibian plane was on the after deck of the ship. Even as he looked, the pilot started warming up the motors. Just as he'd guessed and told Zybyski. Augustine was flying for home as soon as the sphere was in water.

The three men were inside the gondola then and the professor started explaining its many apparatuses. The inner chamber was twelve feet in diameter, its three foot thickness of triple berylumin wall sufficient to withstand an external pressure of twenty thousand pounds per square inch.*

In a half hour the watchers on the ship's deck saw Augustine climb through the manhole of the car and emerge. He looked over the side and saw that the huge oil bag was filled. The hose couplings had been disconnected and the bag nipples capped. Chuckling, he swung home the heavy plug to close the manhole and told the mechanics to make it fast. Then he turned to the grinning guards.

"They're safe there as they would be anywhere," he said. "And I guess you fellows aren't sorry. Your work is done; you only have to wait for the cutter that is to take you back. When they return to the surface they're free according to law. And I wish them luck, for my sake as well as their own."

This last seemed sincere, spoken huskily. None of those who heard could doubt the professor's real feelings. He was a man of science, the listeners were convinced, who had a heart. Anxious to see his experiments succeed, anxious to give the world any new dis-

* This balloon itself is an envelope of oil-and-water-tight metallic fabric filled with oil. Oil, being lighter than water, buoys up the heavy gondola in water as helium or hydrogen lifts the car of a balloon in air. Only in this case the ballast is of sufficient weight to draw the balloon gradually to the bottom of the ocean.—Author.

* This is equivalent to more than forty-six thousand feet of sea water and so the car is safe at depths fifty percent greater than any likely to be encountered in either Atlantic or Pacific.—Author.

coveries that might result. At the same time, ready to cooperate with and serve the ends of justice under the new laws. Why, he was positively pale with emotion!

As the great three-legged and six-finned sphere was lowered over the side, the professor stood with arms folded, his face hidden from the rest. Obviously, he was deeply moved as the waters closed over his brain child. And when the great oil-filled balloon began to sink and the cable from the derrick was let loose from the gondola below, he turned and hurried toward the amphibian.

"So long," he called back. "I'll keep in . . ."

Just then the deck televis shrieked: "Grab him! That's not Augustine! It's Zybyski. Take off his goggles and mustache."

The guards closed in swiftly and surely.

CHAPTER II

Monster of the Deep

THE real Francis Augustine did not recover consciousness until the outside pressure gauge registered more than eleven hundred pounds. They were nearly a half mile beneath the surface. Trussed and gagged as he was, the professor could only struggle madly and make horrible grunting noises as his eyes seemed about to fall from their sockets.

Ungently, Burke ripped the gag from his mouth.

"G-god!" babbled Augustine, looking wildly at the gauges. "We're down. We've submerged."

Burke was untying the professor's feet. "You're telling me!" he said savagely. "And how do you like it?"

"But, Dick!" Augustine's stare was frenzied and perspiration oozed out in great beads on his forehead as he struggled to a sitting position. "You don't understand. You—"

"Damn right I understand. You fixed things so I'd stay sunk and now you're in the same boat. Don't think so much of it, do you?"

"But I didn't mean—"

"No, you didn't mean to come along. But here you are. It was all right for me, wasn't it? When it's you it's different. Now, see if you can figure a way out—for both of us."

Augustine's flabby jowls twitched violently; his pendulous lower lip quivered. "Un-untie my hands, Dick," he begged.

Burke obliged, first patting his own hip pocket, to which the professor's capsule projector had been transferred. "Don't try anything funny," he warned. "I've your gun. Not that I'd need it."

The older man was almost as white now as had been Zybyski when he stepped outside the sphere. With his hands finally free, he at once buried his face in them. His big frame shook convulsively. He was in a mortal funk.

"Snap out of it!" snarled Burke. "Get your think tank working. What'd you do to this thing to wreck it so it couldn't rise?"

The professor looked up with an agony of craven fear in his every expression. He was suddenly an old, old man. "I—I welded the ballast weights to the shell," he admitted.

"That's nice. *Lovely*. All beautifully taken care of on the outside where we can't get at them. Where the pressure'd flatten us like chewing gum even if we could get out there. You're good, you are."

Augustine slumped to his knees, started alternately praying and cursing. Incoherently. Burke slapped him back to blubbering sanity.

"Get yourself together and face the

facts. If we have to die, let's die sane anyway. And if there's any chance at all, let's try and dope it out."

"There's no chance in the world," sobbed the professor.

Burke drew back his arm for another swing. "Don't, don't!" the demoralized man pleaded. "I'll be good."

He was like a child. The young research engineer regarded him contemptuously, turned his back and moved to the televis. "This is no good down this far, is it?" he asked.

"No—not below a thousand feet."

Burke looked at the pressure gauge. Two thousand pounds, it read. "We're not sinking very fast," he said.

"No, the difference in weight of the car in excess of the buoyancy of the balloon is very little. The descent must be gradual for safety."

"Safety—hmpf. Call this safety?"

"I mean under ordinary circumstances." Augustine was coming around to normal.

"Then we wouldn't need to discard much weight to halt our downward progress, would we?"

"A couple of hundred pounds would do it now. But there is no way of throwing off any weight at all. The manhole can't be opened from inside; even if it could be the pressure would swamp us. No hope!"

"How long will our air last? Food and water?"

"Four days with two aboard."

Burke's eyes narrowed, then he laughed. "Hell's bells," he chuckled. "No need of killing you or of you killing me to make it last eight days, is there? That would only prolong the agony for the one that was left alive. Might just as well wait for what's coming to us."

He stared at the professor. Augustine stared back. The spectre of certain death was between them.

THREE thousand pounds, nearly seven thousand feet, they were down before either of them thought of switching on the outside lights to see what there was to see of the fabled denizens of the deep. Until now no man still alive and sane had seen more than vague shadows on a color screen. That is, at any depth such as this.

"You can finish telling me about the gadgets now," said Burke. "How do you turn on the outer floods?"

Augustine showed him, first illuminating the huge balloon that swayed above them, then the sides, then below. There were five of the thick glass ports, one above, one below, and three spaced around the middle. They saw absolutely nothing outside the circles of misty brilliance and nothing within the zones of illumination excepting a few wriggling, corkscrewlike glistening threads that slithered upward over the circular ports. They were utterly alone in the depths.

"Showing you about the gadgets, as you call them, reminds me," said the professor. "How did you and the other manage this? Where's he? All I recall is when the mountain fell on my head."

Burke laughed in spite of the seriousness of the situation. His companion was taking it better than he'd expected —so far. "That was Teddy," he told him. "He slugged you from behind. You didn't make a sound to warn those outside. Then he took your sun glasses and stuck on the false mustache we'd made from his own hair in imitation of your real one. We stripped you and he changed to your clothing. Then he went outside and bossed the job of closing us up and dropping us over."

Augustine nodded. "Yes, that way, he could easily pass for me." Dropping his eyes to the unfamiliar clothing he'd not even noticed yet, the professor

snapped: "But you—you aided a criminal to escape. He would get away in my plane and not be suspected!"

"That's what you think. And that's what Teddy thought. I kidded him along so I could get you right here where you are. I won—he lost. Once we were down I used the televis—quick. Zybyski will say it was a double cross. I call it justice—turning him in again. Think I'd let a rat like that loose? He'd be murdering someone else's baby in a year or so. Oh, no."

Augustine looked thoughtful. "You did a pretty good job at that," he admitted. "And I guess I deserve what I'm getting, too."

Burke was amazed; his companion was as cool now as a cucumber. Was he cooking up something in his treacherously inventive mind?

"You certainly do deserve it. But isn't there something we can do? No possible chance at all?"

The professor shook his head dolefully. Then his eyes widened suddenly and he pointed to one of the viewing ports. "Look!" he yelped. "What on earth is that?"

They had switched off the outer floodlights to save the batteries as much as possible, though why they needed to save them was not clear. "Looks like a submarine," exclaimed Burke.

It did. Something was approaching steadily in the inky blackness out there, something with a long row of small lights along its side and with a twin beam exploring ahead. Burke switched on their side floods and the creature was revealed, not as any man-made duplication of Captain Nemo's *Nautilus*, but as a gigantic living, swimming monster that carried its own lights. One look at its enormous bulk, its ten foot long razor fins, its huge head and broad, tusk-filled mouth was enough for Burke. He switched off the lights both inside and outside the sphere. The creature was five hundred feet long if an inch.

"Holy Smoke!" he gasped. "That thing could swallow us whole. And if it should get tangled up in the cables above or puncture the balloon, it'll be just too bad. Hope he didn't see us."

Augustine moaned a little in the darkness. "As well go that way as the other," he whispered.

It was true. Burke felt a little foolish over his useless precautions. But he didn't turn on the inside lights until they'd seen the monster that was like a lighted ocean liner in the blackness drift on up past the bulking shadow of the balloon and out of sight.

FIFTY-FIVE hundred pounds. About two and a half miles of ocean lay above them. A distinct sense of movement was felt suddenly; the pointer of the gauge swung rapidly across the scale to sixty-two hundred, then remained stationary.

"What the hell," said Burke. "Did we fall?"

Augustine looked at another of the gauges. "We were swept downward by a submarine current. And we're still in it, but it has leveled off and is carrying us rapidly toward the northeast. Sa-ay!"

The professor's eyes brightened on the exclamation.

"Say what?" Burke couldn't see anything to be jubilant over.

"There is a chance, just one remote chance," said Augustine, "that we may be swept into a rising current. Sort of an updraft, you know. We're heading for the Irish coast now. Where we started, the depth was more than five miles. It'll be getting shallower after a while. And if there is such an upward current and we strike it . . ."

"What are the probabilities?" asked the younger man dubiously.

Augustine's face fell. "About ten million to one," he admitted.

"That's what I thought."

They had started dropping again at about the former rate; the current had been unable to hold them. It was like drifting in the car of an ancient gas-filled balloon, at the mercy of every errant wind, falling for lack of ballast to throw out. They could discharge oil from the bag above, of course, the same as you could use the ripcord of a gas balloon. But that would hasten the end, not prolong it.

"Let's light up outside," said Burke for want of action. And he switched on the floods as he spoke. He hadn't the heart to go to work on Augustine right now. He'd suffer enough—later.

A mountain peak loomed immediately alongside, vanished into the blackness above. They were slithering down the sheer face of a granite cliff, the great balloon overhead bouncing over its jutting ledges. Fortunately, their descent was very gradual.

And then the balloon had lodged between two projecting fingers of rock. They jerked to a stop. The car dangled, swaying before the mouth of a huge cavern. The pressure was seventy-one hundred.

Burke's eyes tried to penetrate the gloom beyond the white wall of light that pushed perhaps a hundred feet into the cavern. He had thought he saw something flicker back there. He had! Four discs of luminosity swam into view, like the eyes of a team of dogs gleaming in an automobile headlight glare. But these four ghastly orbs grew steadily larger.

And then an ugly, squirmy monster hove into view. This was a giant squid, an octopus thing with four eyes that reared its hideous body forty feet from the cavern floor on three of its sucker-lined arms while the other five arms weaved and twined toward the dangling sphere. Two eyes were beneath, two above a cavernous, wide-open mouth that was lined with row upon row of glistening incisors. A tentative arm reached out as the terrifying creature advanced, its tip curling around a few of the cables that connected their car with the balloon. The car swung crazily in toward that yawning mouth, spilling the two men in a heap on the floor.

"God!" screamed Augustine. "It's going to swallow us."

The car jerked as cables snapped. And then the great jaws closed in over them. There was the crunch of huge teeth on the berylumin shell. But the creature, powerful as it was, could make no impression on that glass-hard surface. The car rolled inside and the teeth snapped shut on what was left of the frayed cables.

There were convulsive heavings of the sphere and it rolled over and over in the huge cavity of a mouth, battering its two occupants against bunks, instrument tables and walls. A few dizzying flashes came to them in the tumbling, of great reddish-purple splotches and dangling fleshy members, of a constricted opening down which their sphere spun madly.

The monster was swallowing them whole!

CHAPTER III

Monster with a Stomachache

FINALLY the car lurched to rest with its floor cocked at an angle. Not so bad, though; at least they could stand. They took stock of their bruises and of the bizarre surroundings.

"Hell of a note," grumbled Burke.

Out through a port he saw only the swirling green stickiness of the digestive juices of their captor's interior. "Ugh!"

Augustine was blubbering again. "Dick," he whined. "Before I die, I must confess. I was the one who killed Van den Broek. I set the police on you. I planted the evidence. Forgive me, Dick."

Forgive? Burke forgot their plight, forgot everything but blind rage. This man would've let him rot in the pen. He'd have sent him to the hot seat if he could. And now this! But rage was futile now.

"Hell of a time to confess!" snarled Burke. "You make me think of the guy who paid his pal fifty bucks he'd owed him for ten years—just when the boat they were on was torpedoed. Sinking. Shut up your bellering and tell me where's the gadget you charge the shell with."

"What gadget?"

"You built a weapon into these things to ward off undersea monsters. What good is it? How does it work?"

The demoralized professor shakily indicated a small control panel. Burke examined it, then yanked the rheostat all the way over. The result was instant and nearly catastrophic. A blinding flash outshone their floods in the green murk outside. The car heaved wildly, smashed him to the floor. Then he came up against the wall under a table.

There were violent upheavals and shudderings.

"The thing's trying to vomit us out," moaned the professor. "And we're stuck in its throat."

Burke could see that this was so. A port faced directly out toward the creature's mouth. The mouth was stretched wide. Through its gaping maw the engineer could see reflected in the glare of their flood lights the rocky rim of the cavern entrance. And the frayed cable ends dangling from above. Then, with a wild lunge, the monster flung out of its lair into the black abyss of the sea.

Clinging to the bolted-down legs of the table, Burke managed to get to his feet. He switched off the floods and saw that the green murk remained alight. With lambent flame that told of intense heat generated by this weapon that had been loosed within the beast. There were momentary flashes of emptiness where the thick green fluid would clear away only to be replaced by rolling whiteness. Steam!

"Hey, Prof!" Burke yelped. "What kind of energy's this?"

No answer. Augustine had fainted. He couldn't take it.

While the car swayed and teetered in the mad flight of the tortured beast, Burke clung to the table and studied the instruments. There was an indicator of horizontal speed and a compass. They were traveling east-northeast at ninety miles an hour! The pressure was decreasing. Which meant they were rising as well! Could this thing travel! Burke shut off the energy, just to see what would happen.

Their tremendous pace continued, but the pressure began to mount. The monster was diving. Or was it that? An inspiration; he switched on the energy again. The flaming in the green stuff commenced anew. Once more the pressure outside was decreasing. It was due to a gas generated in those digestive juices by the energy. They were making a veritable balloon of a living creature, their own container plugging its throat to retain the gas.

Burke could envision the bloating of the vast body which was taking place to such an extent that the weight of water displaced was considerably greater than its own. He found he could vary its

buoyancy by manipulating the rheostat and thus regulate the speed of ascent. They were in the body of a living, though probably slowly dying, submarine balloon that was to an extent navigable. But the creature continued to propel itself madly in the northeasterly direction and this was entirely out of control. "What a belly-ache it must have!" thought Burke, grinning in spite of himself.

HE was careful to keep the current low so they would not rise too swiftly, knowing that if the ascent became so rapid as to permit insufficient time for internal and external pressures to equalize, the creature would explode violently. Though he couldn't see how it would do him any good personally, he had a mad desire to get up to the surface. If the monster should expire then, as undoubtedly it would, and its carcass should float, there was still a bare chance for life. Even if it did mean prison for himself. He wondered how much pressure difference the thickly armored hide of the beast would stand. How much stretching due to the expansion in volume by tissue penetration of the gases. Undoubtedly there was some escape through natural orifices other than the gullet. Enough to act as a safety-valve, he hoped.

Augustine was stirring, groaning. The pressure gauge showed less than two thousand pounds when he tottered to his feet. Burke wasn't at all sure now how nearly this was an accurate indication of depth, since he didn't know the pressure differential between the inside and outside of their animate balloon. He thought this differential could not be very great. Their forward speed was slowing considerably; the monster was losing strength.

The professor gazed disbelievingly at the instruments. "Dick!" he exclaimed. "We're going up. We're saved!"

"Not yet,"—drily. "Think it out, stupid. We've a chance in a million, is all."

Fifteen hundred pounds, a thousand. The swirling green murk outside the ports had almost vanished. Burke could see the distended wall of the creature's stomach. It was dripping great blobs of sticky black stuff from several torn spots. The thing was hemorrhaging internally. He backed off further on the rheostat and the pressure gauge pointer moved slowly toward the lower end of the scale. They would have to keep their carrier intact as long as possible.

Augustine was talking again and was still excited. "You're wrong, Dick. There's more than a chance in a million; there's a *good* chance. Listen: I see you're easing it upward as gently as possible. That's right. We'll make the surface. The monster will die, of course; it's dying now. But it will float when we get up there. The carcass won't burst. Not if the pressures inside and outside are kept from differing too greatly, especially too suddenly. Don't you see?"

"Sure I see. As far as you've gone. So then what?"

"Why, the televis, naturally. We can start calling for help even before we're afloat—a thousand feet before. Our own ship, any ship can easily come to us. We're saved, I tell you!" The professor's voice screeched as he tried to convince himself of his own words.

"Ever stop to think how much battery power this is taking? Take a slant at the charge indicator."

Augustine gasped. The battery charge was already down to thirty percent of full capacity. "I—I didn't think of that," he faltered.

"Lots of things you haven't thought of," sneered Burke. "For one, the mur-

der rap that'll be facing you if you do get up top alive."

This was a blunder. Burke had underestimated his companion's cunning and the courage which would come from desperation. In fact, he'd talked too much. He'd put ideas into the other's head that wouldn't have sunk in of their own accord.

The professor's voice changed subtly. He moved near and peered at the pressure gauge. "Eight hundred fifty pounds, two thousand feet," he murmured. Then: "You wouldn't turn me in, would you, Dick?"

"What did you do to me?"

Then, taken completely by surprise, Burke went down under the full weight of the enraged scientist. As he lurched from the instrument table, his hand automatically clung to the rheostat handle. He felt it slam over to the full "on" position. Then his grip tore loose.

AUGUSTINE'S pudgy but powerful fingers twisted around his windpipe as they rolled over and over on the floor. Burke tore at them frantically, finally got them free. The squid mustn't explode!

"You fool!" he croaked. "The energy's full on. We'll go up like a shot. We'll—"

The professor, fighting blindly, evidently did not get the import of the scarcely intelligible words. He was pounding at Burke's face with everything he had and it was all the younger man could do to wriggle himself free and roll back against the wall.

"The energy!" he managed to howl before Augustine's two feet struck him together. "You damn—"

He lashed out blindly as pain from the heavy double kick flashed racing torture through his body. With sudden new energy, he scrambled erect and dived for the rheostat. Then he came down hard with his chin on the table. His antagonist had wrapped those huge arms around his knees and was dragging him down. Hell of a way to fight! Thoughts weren't at all clear now to Burke but he knew he must get to that rheostat. They were rising like a rocket.

"Wait, Prof!" he groaned.

He twisted free and lurched upward, starting a swift right to his opponent's bobbing jaw. But it never landed. There came a terrific wrench and a simultaneous crash as of the entire universe disrupting. Then utter blankness.

CHAPTER IV

A Submarine Plateau

BURKE'S first conscious impression was of a continuous six foot length of aching bone and sinew that was obviously his own body, next of something freezing cold and steel-hard that pressed flatly and determinedly against his cheek. He opened an experimental eye. And with it he gazed directly into two frigidly staring optics of the most fearsome creature he had ever beheld. This nightmare object was not more than three feet from his face. He closed the one eye and concentrated his muddled wits on what he had seen. Or had it been hallucination merely? Such things couldn't exist.

It had been like a fish, yet it was not a fish. A head like that of one of the Furies, but larger than a man's, had faced him with such a malevolent stare as only a basilisk might achieve. And the head, though attached to a sinuously scaly body with iridescent fins, was covered with long black hair that streamed upward as if each strand was electrified and straining to be away. The mouth had been most horrible of

all, with two long curved tusks projecting from the lower jaw to the level of the glaring eyes, and a dozen smaller tusks arching down from the upper jaw. The face itself, if it could be called a face, was a distorted, evilly grinning gargoyle. It was purple. Burke opened both of his eyes suddenly. The thing was still there.

Then his mind began working normally. He remembered. The surface against his cheek was one of the thick glass ports of Augustine's sphere. His aches and pains were from the fight with the professor. No, not from the fight; something had happened. Of course—the big octopus thing had blown up. That accounted for the shock which had stunned him and flung him where he now lay. And they were in the water once more; this was a denizen of the ultimate depths hovering outside that port. Where was Augustine? Was he alive? Recalling his former rash spouting of words, Burke decided to keep quiet until he could learn for himself.

Turning slightly, repressing a groan at the pain it caused, he cast his eyes unward. He was under the instrument table. His attention was drawn by a shuffling of feet on the steel floorplates. Augustine, then, was alive and conscious.

Deep silence followed; there was not even the faint whine of the tiny battery-powered energy generator. Of course, with the monster no more, they would not need that now. Further reflection convinced Burke they hadn't dropped any great distance. The shock of falling to the ocean floor at a depth of even two or three miles would have broken their bones, probably killed them. Slowly he turned his head toward where he'd heard the shuffling.

The professor was seated on the edge of the lower bunk, eating from an opened tin and regarding his curiously. He was somehow changed; his mien was composed, confident, gloating. None of his former panicky nervousness; he was sure of himself now. He actually grinned.

"Nice long sleep you had," he remarked. "Sorry I fell on you."

"Uh-huh." Painfully, Burke crawled out from under the table, his head throbbing as if it would split as he struggled to his feet, where he stood swaying. "Where are we?"

The professor waved his spoon airily toward one of the other ports. "On the very rim of a submarine plateau where our giant creature kindly deposited us when his sudden rise in the watery world rent him asunder."

Burke gasped. Not only was Augustine trying to be flowery in his speech, but what he said was true. Out there in the brilliance of the sphere's floods there showed the edge of a precipice. Vast chunks of the defunct monster draped over its jagged outline, huge oozing and quivering blobs on which a score of miscellaneous horrors of the deep were feeding. The young engineer shuddered. He looked at the pressure gauge. Three hundred forty pounds, eight hundred feet. So near and yet so far. There still remained twenty percent of the battery charge.

"So now what?" he demanded.

"So now the *Scipio* is on her way to haul us up from here. Have someting to eat? You need it." Leering, Augustine passed can and opener.

"You mean you've had them on the televis?" Burke's eyes narrowed. Realizing suddenly that he was very hungry, he opened the tin and ate.

"I HAVE and they're on their way. That damned living sub we were in carried us nearly two hundred miles toward Ireland. But the *Scipio* will

reach us in a few hours." The triumph in Augustine's insolent stare was patent. He had put something over.

"So then what?" Burke mumbled through a mouthful of corned beef.

The professor shrugged. "Then I go back to work and you go back to jail." His little black eyes glittered and he patted the capsule gun where it lay beside him on the bunk.

"So you frisked me," growled the engineer.

"Why not? The tables had to turn somehow."

"The law's been satisfied. I'm free now, Prof. And you're the one who's in jeopardy. You told me you killed Van den Broek." Burke was only sparring for time and opportunity; he knew what the reaction would be.

Augustine laughed harshly. "Who'd take the word of a convict against mine? And there are two more charges against you now. You'll be a third offender now and will surely be sentenced to life imprisonment, don't forget that."

"What do you mean, two more charges?"

"First degree assault on me for one thing, kidnaping me for another." The professor's grin was ghoulish.

Burke was silent for a long time after this. Everything Augustine had said was true. They wouldn't take his unsupported word that the professor had confessed. And the assault and kidnaping charges were bad—they'd stick. He hadn't thought of those at the time. Then, he hadn't had the faintest idea he'd ever come up alive in this sphere. He'd only thought of taking Augustine with him. Hadn't cared about the rest. Now it was of great importance. But, maybe . . . Burke remembered his foolishness in talking too much previously; now he would keep his own counsel. Get out of this as best he could.

Augustine's eyes never left him nor did his fingers stray far from that destructive capsule projector. He had the upper hand now and he intended to keep things this way.

"But you did kill Van den Broek," Burke said. Whether it would be of any use or not, he determined to get more detail.

"Certainly I did!" Augustine was vigorously defiant. "And for good reason. Time after time he embarrassed me before the Academy of Science. Time after time he bungled my experiments and made a laughing stock of me. He would have ruined me if I had let him live. Of course I killed Van den Broek, but you can't prove it. Nor can anyone else."

"You mean you stole some of his inventions and called them yours. And you were afraid he'd expose you. *That's* why you killed him."

The professor reddened, puffing out his fat cheeks as if about to explode in a tirade. But he subsided, again laughing harshly. "Oh, maybe that did have something to do with it," he admitted. "Might as well admit it to you privately; you'll never be able to tell. It was necessary that Van be removed, necessary too that someone other than myself be found guilty of the murder."

"And that's where I came in," Burke said bitterly. "You hated me for the same reason you hated Van, so you planted the evidence on me."

Augustine now chuckled, much pleased with himself. "Quite right, my boy. And I did it cleverly, too. Used your pistol with a rubber glove on my hand to prevent fingerprints, then put it back in your own drawer, from which I'd taken it. Your cigaret case, which was found beside the body—I put that there, too. And *your* prints were on that. You hadn't a chance and you haven't now."

"And then when you found I'd won this alternative sentence, you *welded* the ballast weights to the bottom of the car to be sure I'd never come up. Swell setup." Burke talked deliberately with dully hopeless tones. He was getting an idea.

"All true, my boy. I think I've done a pretty good job, even if I missed out on this and nearly lost my own life. With Van out of the way and you behind the bars for life, it will be plain sailing for me now." Fat fingers caressed the capsule gun. "At first I was going to kill you—when the squid blew up. I figured one could live longer than two and knew I could get away with that, too. Self defense, you know. But then I saw where we had landed and found there'd be enough battery and air, so I decided life imprisonment was probably better after all. You won't like that, will you?"

Burke stared at the man in open astonishment. "No, I wouldn't like that," was all he could say.

Augustine was so utterly cold-blooded about it all, so completely sure of himself, so entirely self-satisfied, that it seemed incredible.

AFTER that, Burke wandered aimlessly in the narrow confines of the sphere, tinkering with this instrument and that, always under the professor's watchful eye. Few words passed between them. Each was too occupied with his own thoughts.

There were frequent televis calls, always answered by the older man in pompous voice. World Telecasts came in with a request for a speech and Augustine's triumph knew no bounds.

Burke listened in mounting disgust as he mouthed long strings of superlatives and posed before the iconoscopic scanning eye with the capsule propector against his prisoner's temple for added effect. Forgetting entirely that this was his first deep sea dive in his own or any other contrivance. Bragging of scientific achievment, dramatizing his kidnaping, boasting of subduing a dangerous criminal and returning him to justice, lying blatantly about the means of their salvation from a watery grave, taking full credit to himself. It was sickening. But Burke held his peace.

"See what chance you'll have?" gloated the man, when wiping the perspiration from his brow after this effort.

The engineer did not reply.

Another silent hour passed before the *Scipio* was overhead and her grappling hooks were reaching down for them, taking hold.

Then Augustine played his trump card. "I suppose you think you'll get somewhere mentioning the welded weights," he said.

Burke started. "I had thought of that," he admitted.

The professor drew a slender tube from his pocket with one hand, keeping his prisoner covered with the capsule gun in his other. "Well, you won't do it," he grated. "You know what this is. Your own invention, the psychoneural regrader. It'll blast out your memory of the past ten hours entirely. You will never be able to tell anything of this, because you won't remember. And you get it *now*."

Burke tensed as the tube leveled at him.

CHAPTER V

Battle on the Ocean Floor

KNOWING that no man can perform two differing actions simultaneously with any degree of success in either, Burke took his chances on that last word of the professor's. Figured he was concentrating on the amnesia.

Swinging sharply with his right hand,

he knocked the regrader from the man's grasp and hooked a stiff left into his paunch at the instant the capsule gun popped. Its deadly missile crashed harmlessly into an instrument panel as Burke's right fist caught Augustine in his gaping mouth, splashing out a gush of blood and knocking him into the bunk. But the professor clung fast to the pistol, gasping, stuttering primeval wrath and spitting out teeth. The engineer clamped on his gun wrist just as the sphere swayed to the tugging cables and commenced rising.

Augustine brought up a knee violently as Burke twisted his thick wrist. Burke went dizzy and weak with pain. His antagonist was a powerful brute, as he'd learned before. It took superhuman efforts of will and half-paralyzed muscles to keep him down and hold to his gun hand at the same time. Slamming away weakly with his right, Burke willed a desperate new accession of vigor into his left and tore the projector loose. It clattered to the floor and he had both fists free to use on the professor. His head was clearing now and muscular strength flowing back. In a few moments the big man was groggy and Burke retrieved both gun and regrader.

"Now!" he rasped, "*I'm* the boss. Get back there." He prodded Augustine with the capsule gun and experienced savage glee at the bulging of his victim's eyes.

"Don't shoot!" babbled the professor. "I'll do anything. I'll—"

"Shut up! Burke twisted a tiny dial on the regrader and pressed its latch. A blue haze bathed Augustine's head for an instant, then vanished as if soaked up by a sponge. A blank look came into the popping eyes and the big man went stiff-limbed as an automaton.

There was a clank overhead. The sphere had ceased rising. They were alongside the *Scipio* — or possibly on deck already. The televis shrilled insistently. Burke switched it off, knowing this would send back an "out-of-order" signal to the ship.

Immediately there were sounds at the manhole. And in two minutes its cover clanked off. Burke shoved the doll-jointed professor through and tumbled after him. They were on the deck of the *Scipio*.

It was to have been a notable occasion. It was, though not as had been intended. They moved into a circle of staring iconoscopic eyes. Above them swung the microphones of the telecasters and high above these hovered a swarm of gyrocopters. The sea around was dotted with bobbing amphibians. Everywhere were goggling human eyes.

The captain of the ship, his officers and most of the crew, were there. There were many strangers in the crowd, some of them obviously dignitaries of one sort or another. This was to have been a crowning triumph for one Professor Augustine.

Burke looked around for the deputies, whom he had thought would be there to rearrest him. Then he remembered; they had returned Zybyski to Sing Sing. He remembered, too, that this was on the high seas. That Captain Jameson was the sole authority. He walked over to that amazed officer and surrendered the capsule.

"What's this all about?" bellowed Jameson, peering amazedly into the blank eyes of Augustine, who stood rigidly before the iconoscopic eyes and microphones. "What have you done to the professor?"

"Nothing serious," Burke assured him. "If you'll give me a chance to prove it, I'll show you and the world that he's a faker. That he's the criminal, not I."

The crowd was closing in around

them. "Put him in irons!" came a shout. "Hang him to the foremast," another. An angry murmur rose and swelled as the telecasters stood irresolute.

Gun in hand, Captain Jameson faced Burke as his officers and crew gathered around. The surrendering of that gun had confused them, and Augustine's condition made them uncertain.

"What's this all about?" demanded the captain. "I asked you before. Now I want it all."

All over the ship, in the surrounding sea, high in the air, there was commotion. Excitement. Expectation of the unexpected. The cries for Burke's scalp died down. His gray eyes looked frankly and levelly into the captain's brown ones.

"I only ask — first — that you have one of your officers examine the ballast weights of Augustine's sphere and report to you what he finds. Then I believe you'll trust me to show you the rest."

Jameson nodded to the mate.

The first officer was back in a moment. "The weights are welded fast to the shell, Captain," he reported in amazed voice.

"You may proceed, Burke," said Jameson.

DICK moved to Augustine's side and, with the regrader still in his pocket, made a new adjustment. Pressed the latch. The professor was at once erect, his usual debonair self. Seeing the microphones, he blinked, then bowed before the iconoscopic battery. Immediately the telecasters became frantically busy. This was to be the scoop of the year. It was.

Instead of addressing his beloved public in the usual way, the professor wandered a bit over the deck, gazed importantly at the sphere, and began to talk with extreme rapidity.

"Well, my hearties," were his first words. "Ready for the plunge? It won't be long. But while the bag's filling. . . . "

From then on, his words became so rapid they could be followed only with the strictest attention.

" . . . It's all right, boys . . . there's only room for three inside . . . we're d o w n . . . we've submerged . . . I welded the ballast weights . . . I guess I deserve what I'm getting, too . . . Dick, before I die, I must confess. I was the one who killed Van den Broek . . . you wouldn't turn me in, would you, Dick? . . . used your pistol with a rubber glove, then put it back . . . your cigaret case . . . I put that there, too . . . it'll blast out your memory of the past ten hours entirely. . . . "

In a very few minutes it was over. Every word Augustine had used during the past ten hours went out over a world-wide hook-up. For an instant after he had finished he seemed dazed. Everyone on the deck of the *Scipio* was dazed. Even the gyrocopters overhead seemed to be drawing back in astonishment. At millions of televis sets throughout the world must have sat dazed listeners and observers.

Suddenly the great professor came to full realization of what he had done. He leaped for the rail and would have plunged overboard. But Captain Jameson and his officers were too quick for him. They had him under arrest about as quickly as Zybyski had been taken before.

It was the end for Francis Augustine, the beginning for Richard Burke.

LATER, in the captain's cabin, Burke sat before the scanners and mikes and told his story in detail, questioned and prompted by Jameson himself from

time to time.

"But, Mr. Burke," said the captain, when he had reached the point of the final landing on deck. "Tell the telecast audience what it was that Augustine intended using on you to blank out your memory. What it was you used to force his confession."

"A very simple discovery of my own. One that the professor had st—er—appropriated and which he did not fully understand. It is well known, of course, that the nerve currents and the activities of the cells of the brain itself are electrical or electro-chemical in nature. Well, investigating multitudes of these phenomena, I stumbled upon a means of controlling the nerve and brain impulses in a number of ways. One of these is a simple blocking process. Another is a means of running back along the thought train for any desired period and then blocking to produce amnesia. And this process can be reversed.

"I merely set back Augustine's clock ten hours, so to speak, and left him in a state of complete amnesia and partial neural paralysis. Then, by a simple reverse adjustment of my pocket apparatus, and an increase in the normal thought rate in the normal forward direction, combined with a hypnotic compulsion impulse, I caused him to repeat at greatly accelerated speed, all his speech of the amnesia period. It was really nothing at all."

"Hm-m. Probably not," commented Captain Jameson. "And do you intend to give this invention to the world, Mr. Burke?"

"To the medical profession only, where it may have uses. Do you think it would be safe in other hands, Captain?" laughed Burke.

"Not in hands like Augustine's, that's sure."

The telecasters signed for a cut off and Burke sank back in the captain's own chair with a sigh of relief. "Thank God, that's over," he said.

Upon which there was an insistent shrilling of the captain's personal televis. It was Al Brown, New York State's governor calling for Richard Burke.

"Mr. Burke," his mellow voice started, without preamble. "This entire remarkable performance has been witnessed by me here in Albany. I congratulate you and greet you as an outstanding citizen of our great State. And I wish to assure you that your legal status is clear in all respects. I shall so direct the Attorney-General at once. Good-bye, Mr. Burke and good luck."

IF YOU WANT THE LADIES TO LIKE YOU

—HOME AGAIN SWEETS—AND HOW KISSABLE YOU LOOK!
—YOU, TOO, DEAR—IT WAS NICE OF YOU TO SHAVE AGAIN BEFORE COMING HOME—
—DON'T BE SILLY! I DIDN'T—I USED THAT SAMPLE OF LISTERINE SHAVING CREAM YOU SENT FOR—IT'S A WONDER!
—IT MAKES MY —LISTERINE PRODUCTS ARE SO GOOD WHILE!
—NO FOOLING SWEETS—I NEVER HAD SUCH A SHAVE! THAT WIRY BEARD JUST SEEMED TO FALL OFF
—AND AFTER—I'M SOLD ON LISTERINE SHAVING CREAM FOR LIFE!
Clip this Coupon

20 FREE SHAVES

Lambert Pharmacal Co., Dept. 130, St. Louis, Mo. Please send me free and postpaid your large sample tube of ☐ Listerine Shaving Cream; ☐ Listerine Brushless Cream. (Check whichever is desired.)

Name_____ Address_____

City_____ State_____

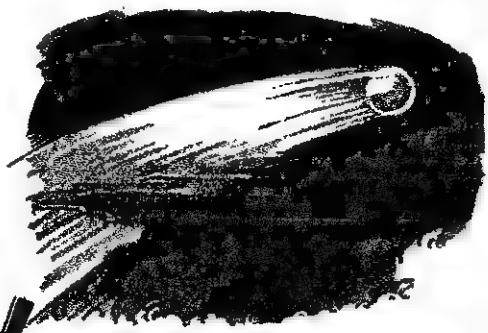
☆ ☆ ☆

RIDDLES OF SCIENCE

Origin of the Moon

THERE HAVE BEEN **SEVERAL THEORIES** ADVANCED ON THE ORIGIN OF **EARTH'S MOON**. BUT **NONE** OF THEM HAVE BEEN **DEFINITELY PROVEN**. **LUNA'S ANTECEDENTS** ARE STILL A **MYSTERY**.

ONE THEORY HAS IT THAT DURING **EARTH'S YOUTH**, WHILE STILL IN A CHAOTIC STATE, A LARGE FRAGMENT BROKE AWAY, AND FLOATED OUT INTO AN ORBIT AROUND THE PARENT BODY, LEAVING WHAT IS KNOWN TODAY AS **MARACOT DEEP** IN THE PACIFIC . . .



ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THE CAPTURING OF A **WANDERING BODY** FROM OUTER SPACE, AND THOUGH MOST ASTRONOMERS TEND TO DISCREDIT THE THEORY, **LUNA** MIGHT ONCE HAVE BEEN A **COMET**.

THE **TIDAL THEORY** IS MOST WIDELY **ACCEPTED**. THE EARTH, TORN FROM THE SUN BY THE ACTION OF A PASSING STAR, IN TURN THREW OFF A SMALLER MASS OF MOLTEN AND GASEOUS MATTER.

THE Chinese have a legend which says their race originally came from the moon, and that the equivalent to Adam and Eve arrived in a ship which flew on wings of flame. The flying dragon. Whether they did or not, some theorists hold that the Moon was originally part of the earth, which broke loose during its molten state, cooled faster, because of its smaller size, and produced a race much earlier than Earth. They point to Chinese legend to bear this out. However, the moon's origin is still unknown.

TRUTH is a

By DAVID WRIGHT O'BRIEN

●

Suddenly the citizens of Weston found themselves in a plague of truth, and there was the devil to pay that a few lies might easily have prevented

●

ALMOST everyone in Weston saw the planes that morning. Crowds pouring from the subways and elevateds on their way to work stopped in the middle of the business district to crane their necks heavenward in gaping astonishment. Traffic became horribly snarled, and the policemen let it stay that way while they, too, watched the writing in the sky.

Ordinary commercial smokewriting would not have merited more than a passing glance from the citizenry of Weston. But this was certainly different. To begin with there were ten planes printing the sky message. Secondly, they were flying so low that it appeared as if they would inevitably crash into the office buildings of the district. And last but not least, there

Lance Randall and Professor Merle fought to get through the panic stricken crowd

was the message itself.

"HONESTY," it read, "IS THE BEST POLICY!"

The skywriting continued for another half hour, during which time the message must have been spelled out fifty times in all. Then the smoke planes departed, and Weston was shrouded by the cloak of blue vapor left in their wake.

ON the twenty-first floor of the Radio Building, located in the heart of Weston, Jack Train, staff announcer for Station W-E-S-T, left the window where he had been watching the skywriting. It was two minutes to nine, and he was due in Studio F at nine o'clock.

"Whew!" snorted Train, "those ships were flying so low you could even smell the smoke." He sniffed deeply as if to prove it to himself.

"Funny smoke at that," he said as he entered Studio F. "It's sort of sweet and fresh smelling."

He cleared his throat and looked at the glass partition behind which the engineer was sitting. The engineer signalled the "on-the-air."

"Goooood morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is Jack Train, your Pobo Toothpaste announcer, greeting you. Have you brushed your teeth today? Don't forget, Pobo is the Toothpaste Supreme. It gives your molars that brilliant lustre so necessary to movie stars. It removes dirty, dingy stains."

As if in a dream, Train heard his voice continuing gaily on past the point where the commercial ended.

"Yes indeed. It removes stains. It removes enamel. Give it a little time and it removes your teeth, too!" . . .

THE business man was coughing slightly. Smoke always made his throat harsh, and those blankety-blank skywriters spread enough smoke around the city to gag a man. He turned into his office building and was standing in front of the elevator when someone slapped him on the back. It was Jones, another business associate whom he hadn't seen in several weeks.

"Good old J. T.," boomed Jones. "Glad to see you, old boy. How have you been? Where've you been keeping yourself? Really great to see you, great!"

A mechanical smile came to the business man's face as he opened his mouth to reply. Something, at that moment, seized control of his tongue.

"You're a damned liar," he heard himself saying. "We hate one another's guts and you know it." . . .

LINDA MEADE, salesgirl in Weston's most exclusive millinery shop, brought forth another hat for Mrs. Blythe. It was the fourteenth hat that Linda had tried on the society matron in the last half hour. Mrs. Blythe coughed disapprovingly as Linda adjusted the hat. "Terribly smoky in here, m'dear."

"It's from those skywriters, modom," Linda explained patiently. "They flew so low that the entire city seems to be filled with it."

Mrs. Blythe, hat on head, began peering this way and that into the mirror before her. She turned to Linda, smiling sweetly. "What do you think of this one, m'dear?"

"It makes you look," said Linda, horrified at what she knew was coming, "like a rather pretty mountain goat!"

LANCE RANDELL placed the telephone back in its cradle and turned to face Professor Merlo. "It's a call from the airport," he stated. "The planes are all in. They've covered the city with our smokewriting."

Professor Merlo, a sparse, bird-like little man, ran a nervous hand through his white hair. "Fine," he said, "splendid. In another hour we should be getting reports on the effect of our experiment."

Randell grinned. "You mean *your* experiment, Professor. *Your* experiment, not mine."

"Without your financial backing," the Professor reminded him, "it would still be a dream. It is yours as much as mine." He beamed fondly on the rugged young man.

"It's still hard to believe," said Randell reflectively. "A gas made from Truth Serum. If it has effect, Professor, are you still sure it will make everyone tell the truth?"

"Yes, my boy. Dishonesty will be an impossibility, providing the gas works."

"Utopia?"

"Maybe. We must first see what effect it has on one city. If it works on Weston we can change the world. At the end of this hour, every citizen in Weston should be affected by it."

Lance Randell lit a cigarette as the Professor fell silent. For the first time in his life, Randell told himself, he was putting his wealth to a good use. A world of Truth! Little shivers of excitement ran through him at the thought of how near they were to changing the course of destiny. He drummed his fingers impatiently on the arm of his chair. This waiting was nerve-racking.

Restlessly he went to the window and gazed for a moment at the serenity of the countryside. "Nice out here," he observed. "So quiet. But right this minute, this peace is killing me."

He turned back from the window. "If you don't mind, I'm going into the city."

Professor Merlo smiled. "Go ahead. I'm a little old to be impatient. I'll stay here to get the reports, and then you might drive back to give me a first hand account."

Randell grabbed his hat. "Swell. Soon as I take a look at our Utopia, I'll call you."

A few minutes later, behind the wheel of his roadster, Randell said to himself, "Somehow this is like—like playing God!"

It sent a shudder through him.

IT was only a fifteen minute drive from Professor Merlo's suburban laboratories to the city limits of Weston, but Randall tried to make it in ten. Halfway there, two sirens began to scream behind him.

"Pull over," snarled the motorcycle copper on his right. Randell brought his car to an abrupt stop. His pursuers walked over to his car. They looked grim and determined and were pulling little black books from their hip pockets.

"Thought you'd shake us at the city limits, eh?"

"I suppose you're gonna tell us you didn't know how fast you was going?" said the second, a tall, morose fellow, the sarcasm dripping from him. "A lousy seventy-five per."

Randell would have sworn that it wasn't his own voice replying with such cheerful unconcern. "Yes," he heard himself saying, "I had been hoping to shake you fellows at the city limits. You wouldn't have been able to pinch me in Weston, y'know. I was not, however, doing seventy-five. Last time I looked, I was inching up close to ninety."

During the ominous silence that followed this announcement, Randell collected the pieces. He sniffed the air suspiciously. Yes, there it was, that faint, sweet freshness! No wonder: the Truth Gas extended all the way to the

city limits!

Suddenly the realization hit him. The officers, themselves, must be affected by the gas, too!

Randell kept his face straight during his next question. "Haven't you policemen ever broken the speeding laws?"

The policemen started to speak and stopped. They looked at each other queerly. "Of course," they declared in stupefied unison. "Lots of times!"

"Fun, ain't it?"

"Great sport," said the flabbergasted motorcycle cops.

"Now," said Randell severely, "after admitting that you break the speed laws yourselves, adding that it's great fun, do you still think you ought to give me a ticket?"

"No," said the morose cop, with an oddly bright glance. "It wouldn't be fair!"

"Well," said Randell, putting his car into gear, "so long, then!"

In his rear vision mirror Lance Randell could see the bewildered motor cops standing at the city limits, scratching their heads. He couldn't hold back any longer. He broke into peals of laughter. But he wasn't laughing by the time he arrived in Weston's business district.

CHAPTER II

The Unexpected Truth

DORIS MARTIN sat at her neat little desk in the ornate offices of Lance Randell Enterprises, Inc., sorting the batch of morning mail. The clock on her desk told her that it was almost ten o'clock. She sighed. The Boss could be expected about noon, if he came in at all that day.

At the thought of Lance Randell, Doris permitted herself another sigh, and still sighing she stared for a moment into the mirror. An oval face, framed by auburn hair and presenting a pert, freckled nose, level gray eyes and mischievous mouth, stared back at her.

The mouth smiled, revealing an even row of dazzlingly white teeth. "You," declared the mouth, "might as well be an office fixture." Doris snapped the compact shut. She coughed slightly. The office seemed terribly smoky this morning. Probably due to those planes that had been skywriting over the city.

She got up to close the window next to her desk when she saw the familiar blue roadster roll up in front of the building. She watched the rugged figure of her boss get quickly out of the car and walk swiftly to the entrance.

She walked back to her desk and sat down, making a conscious effort to assemble the mail. It wasn't any use. There were little thoughts spinning around in her mind. . . .

Doris heard the doorknob turning, and her heart did a more than its usual routine flip-flop. Randell came into the room.

"How's the staff?"

He always said that to her. It was his standard form of greeting, rain or shine, day in and day out. And he seldom waited for an answer. He just kept walking into his office.

Doris followed him.

"Here's your mail, Mr. Randell," she said, keeping her voice carefully impersonal.

She watched him while he sorted swiftly through the letters, noticing the way he hunched his wide shoulders in preoccupation. Then fearing that he might glance up, she turned back to some trivial matter.

"Ahhh." She knew from the sound of his sigh that he'd come to the letter he was looking for. The perfumed message from the bubble dancer.

"Darling," Randell read to himself,

"even a day away from you seems like simply years." As he read on, all thoughts of the past twenty-four hours vanished. From time to time he repeated his sigh. Finally there was the signature, "Your darling Edie."

He looked up from the letter, entranced. "She's wonderful," he said rhetorically to his secretary, "isn't she?"

"Do you mean Miss Dalmar?" Doris heard herself reply.

Randell seemed startled back to reality. He wasn't expecting an answer to his statement. "Why, yes," he said "who else would I mean?"

Doris was flustered. Something had happened. She never meant to say that. It just popped out, and to her astonishment a torrent of words were following her first unintended sentence. She heard her voice continue.

"If you mean she's wonderful," Doris was saying, "I don't think she is. As a matter of fact I think she's nothing but a cheap, gold-digging little vixen. If you'd remove her warpaint, keep her away from the beauty parlor, and eliminate the dubious glamour of her profession, you'd see nothing but a washed-out, frizzled haired little know-nothing!"

RANDELL'S jaw was hanging foolishly agape at the outburst.

"You are just sap enough," Doris went on, "to think that she loves you. She hasn't room enough in that shallow heart of hers for love of anything but money and herself. You have plenty of money, and that's what she's after. Everyone in town knows it but you." Her voice was shaking now, and she knew that she would be crying in another minute.

Automatically Doris was picking up her things, moving toward the door. "It probably never entered your skull that there might be someone in the world who'd care for you even if you didn't have a —"

She was at the door, now, her hand on the knob, speaking again. "It probably never occurred to you that someone could love you so much that nothing else mattered except to see you do something with your utterly pleasant and equally worthless life besides waste it on a bubble dancer!"

For five full minutes Lance sat on the edge of his desk, staring at the door. "Well, I'll be damned," he kept repeating to himself. "Well, I'll be damned!"

His brain was going through the futile thought mechanisms that confront any man when trying to arrive at a logical reason for the actions of a woman. Suddenly the explanation flashed before him. He had forgotten all about the experiment, all about the gas! Doris was affected by the Truth Gas, that explained it all!

But if she—no, it couldn't be. Lance tried to eliminate the logical conclusion to his deductions. With a sinking feeling he was realizing that if the Truth Gas was the cause of her outburst, what she said must have been true, even about Edie!

Lance dashed for the door. There was only one answer to the agony of doubt that filled his mind. Edie was the only person who could supply that answer!

CHAPTER III

The Plague Grows

THE ash tray next to the radio in Professor Merlo's study was heaped with cigarette stubs. Slumped in an armchair before the radio ever since Randell's departure, Professor Merlo had been listening to news flashes from the scene of his Truth Gas experiment.

To be precise about it, the first bulle-

tin was read at 9:45.

"The Weston Board of Health," said the announcer, "is investigating the rumor that an odd epidemic of insanity has broken forth in the heart of the city's business district. Victims of this strange malady are reported to be possessed with the desire to make preposterous and often insulting statements. As yet, however, these rumors have not been authenticated." Professor Merlo smiled. The announcer concluded with, "This bulletin has come to you through the courtesy of the Weston Daily Herald, the World's Worst Newspaper!"

Professor Merlo had guffawed. Now several hours after that, however, his laughter was changed to shocked amazement.

"It can't be so," the white haired little man was telling himself. "All this is but the first spasm. When it has spent itself, everything will settle into our expected pattern. Out of it will grow perfect order and Utopia. It is only natural that confusion should be the first result of such an experiment. By noon everything should be well again!"

But even as he spoke, the Professor had a feeling of uneasiness. He'd been saying the same thing for the last hour and a half. The Professor gulped, his Adam's apple bobbing along his scrawny neck like an egg in a hose. He wished fervently that Randell would return.

The radio news announcer was jabbering excitedly once more. Dully, like a man expecting an unavoidable blow, Merlo turned his head to listen.

"As the strange epidemic of mass insanity grows in Weston, today, it has been learned that three more suicides have occurred in the business district. These happened when the owners of Weston's three largest department stores leaped to their deaths rather than meet the financial ruin facing their establishments."

The Professor shuddered. He was expecting something like that ever since the bulletin of an hour ago which stated that the clerk's in the downtown department stores were selling all goods at less than cost price. Fifteen minutes after that particular bulletin it was announced that delighted shoppers were buying up every bit of stock in the stores—at a net loss of several million dollars to the owners of the stores.

The announcer was babbling on, "This brings today's death rate to the staggering total of one hundred persons. Many of these, as you probably learned in previous flashes, were victims of murder."

PROFESSOR MERLO cringed, remembering the thirty-or-so husbands whose wives dispatched them to their Maker over blood-stained breakfast tables, the fifty-odd revenge slayings perpetrated by persons who learned of long-concealed treacheries by friends or partners, the suicides whose doctors were forced to admit that they were victims of incurable diseases.

"God," Professor Merlo muttered, covering his face with his hands, "God!"

"Police have stated," continued the announcer, "that they are as yet unable to control the army of a thousand men and women who have formed a marching brigade through the streets of the city. These marchers, victims of the strange malady, were all thrown out of work early this morning when they told insulted employers what they thought of them. At present they are fairly orderly, but it is feared that, once they realize their power, looting and bloodshed will result."

Professor Merlo winced, thinking of

the hundreds more who would join the marchers the moment the department stores were shut down.

The telephone was jangling insistently, and Merlo crossed the room slowly to where it stood. He knew what the call would probably be. He'd had nine of them already. He picked the receiver off the hook. "Yes?"

"Hello, Professor Merlo?" a voice on the other end inquired. In an almost toneless whisper the Professor admitted it was.

"This is J. Weems Sharp," said the voice. The Professor was sure of the call now. "Yes," said Merlo, "I think I understand what you're calling for. You want to tell me that you're withdrawing your endowment from my Civic Scientific Foundation."

The voice was amazed. "Yes, that's right. How did you know?"

Merlo ignored the question. "You want to withdraw your endowment from the Foundation because you are quite willing to admit that you don't give a damn for the betterment of your fellows."

"That's right," agreed the voice. "I never cared what happened to the masses. No sense in my wasting money on other people when I can keep it all for myself. I was a chump to let you talk me into it for the past ten years. Now it can go to the devil, I—" Professor Merle put his thumb down on the hook, breaking the connection.

"That makes the tenth one," he told himself bitterly, beginning to pace the floor. "They can all tell the truth, now. They'll admit that they're miserly monsters, and refuse to give any more to scientific charity. It's just about the end of my Foundation. Oh Lord," he thought, "for ten years I've been able to play on the hypocrisy of those money-bags, making them shell out money for the good of their fellowman, pleasing their egos by giving their charity a lot of publicity. But now," he shuddered, "they admit that they don't give a damn for charity!"

THE Civic Scientific Foundation had been the pride and joy of Merlo's existence, and seeing it crumble was one of the hardest blows of the day. Ten years of progress was being wiped out in the space of several hours.

It was clear to the Professor, now, what he and Lance failed to take into consideration before the experiment. People affected by the Truth Gas would not only tell what they *knew* to be true, but would also admit to things which had been lying under the hypocritical cloak of their subconscious thoughts for years. In other words, the gas was exposing ideas which people never even previously suspected they cherished!

"Something," muttered the tight-lipped scientist, "has to be done, and done fast." He paused before the window. And as he looked out across the country-side, it seemed as though nature itself had fallen under the mood of gloomy foreboding. The sun was hidden behind ominous formations of black rain-laden clouds.

CHAPTER IV

Lance Makes a Test

IF Lance Randell hadn't been so preoccupied with the doubts that clouded his romance he might have noticed the growing confusion in Weston. As it was, however, he looked neither left nor right as he put his high-powered roadster into gear and shot out for the Weston Tower Hotel where the blonde Edie had an apartment.

The crowds that were beginning to surge through the streets escaped his notice, the clang of speeding ambulances and police wagons failed to enter

his brain, so one-tracked was his determination.

In a little less than three minutes after he'd left the office Randall drew up in front of the elaborate canopy marking the entrance to the skyscraping Weston Tower Hotel. Edie's apartment was on the fortieth floor, and Randell didn't bother to telephone from the lobby. He crossed the room swiftly and stepped into an elevator.

Edie Dalmar, when she opened the door, was astonished to see a breathless and strangely intense Lance Randell standing there with his hat in his hand. For a moment her oval, doll-like features registered amazement, then Weston's Loveliest Bubble Dancer regained her composure. She arched delicately penciled eyebrows in a smile.

"Daahhling, what a surprise! What are you doing heah at this hour?"

Lance entered the room and put his hat on the mantel. He turned and spoke.

"Edie, there are some things I have to ask you. It's very important, and I don't want you to be angry with me."

Edie moved sinuously across the room, smoothing her dark hair with scarlet nailed fingers. She sat down on the couch and turned violet eyes on Lance. "Why, deah, ah don't know jes' what it's all about, but go right ahead and ask me anything you want to."

Lance removed an enormous, floppy Cupid doll from the cushion next to her and sat down. For a moment he was silent. This wasn't going to be easy. He knew that any question he'd ask would bring a starkly truthful answer. But he had to know. He forced himself to speak.

"Edie, do you really love me?"

The bubble dancer opened her slightly petulant lips to protest, but Lance went on. "I mean, do you love me for myself? Is it, is it me that you love, or is it my money?"

There, Lance told himself, it was done. He felt his heart hammering wildly as Edie started to speak. He felt as though the answer would mean the difference between life and death.

"Why, daahhling, of course I love you! Honey, whatevah made you fancy that I cared a speck about your money? I'd marry you even if you were a pauper!"

Randell was ecstatic in his relief. They were all wrong! Doris had been a spiteful, jealous wench. Edie was true! He knew it all along, Edie was true! She didn't give a damn for his money. She loved him for himself alone.

By now, however, Edie was pouting. Two enormous tears began to trickle down her cheeks. She was sobbing silently, dabbing at her eyes with a scrap of lace.

"HONEY," said Randell, sensing that he had wounded her feelings, "I never meant to doubt you, honestly. I'm sorry I ever asked you, but I was desperately unsure. I had to know. Please forgive me."

Edie, however, was not so easily consoled. She increased her snuffling. "You thought I, I, I, I was cheap!" she wailed.

Lance Randell had a sudden inspiration. "Edie!"

No reply, merely more snuffling.

"Edie," he repeated. This time she looked up.

"What?" she asked between sobs.

"You know that coat you admired so much the other day?"

Edie's snuffling lessened perceptibly. "Yes?"

"I'd like you to have it as a present, dear."

Gone were the tears, silenced was the sobbing. Edie's doll face was wreathed in smiles. She was in his arms.

"Daahhling," breathed Edie.

"My dear," said Randell.

The floppy Cupid doll looked up from the floor where it had been dropped, its button eyes shining cynically.

WITH singing heart Lance left Edie's apartment. The world was once more righted, and now he had time to think of the second most important thing in his life, the experiment. Then, too, he'd almost forgotten that Merlo was waiting for a call from him back in the laboratories.

He glanced at his watch. 10:30. Plenty should be happening by now. The gas had had more than an hour and a half to take effect on the populace. There should be some interesting developments. There were.

As he stepped from the elevator into the lobby, Randell was immediately aware that things were popping in the Weston Tower Hotel. There had been a scant twenty people sitting about in the spacious room when Randell had first arrived there. Now, not more than a half hour later, the place was literally jammed with people. Everyone seemed to be talking at once, and in the voices there was a growing undercurrent of hysteria.

The fever spot seemed to be located around the Room Desk, and Randell began elbowing through the mob, moving in that direction.

"Stand back, buddy!"

Lance Randell was in the front of the circle around the Desk, when a blue-clad arm shot out to stop his progress. He noticed, then, that a cordon of eight policemen had blocked off a space around the Desk, and were holding the crowd back.

In the middle of the space, face downward, lay a gray haired man dressed in morning coat and striped trousers. His head was pillowed in a pool of his own blood, and his right hand held a death-like clutch on an automatic pistol.

"Horrified, Randell addressed the policeman who barred his way.

"What happened, Officer?"

"Suicide," was the terse reply. "Shot himself while we were on the way to get him."

A pop-eyed little man on his right supplied Lance with the rest of the information. "It's Gordon Carver," the little man blurted. "He's killed himself, rather than go to jail."

Gordon Carver! Randell was stunned. Gordon Carver was Weston's greatest philanthropist, most charitable millionaire, a leading citizen! He looked at the millionaire's body, so queerly sprawled out across the cold marble floor. The pop-eyed champ was still talking.

"Yeah," said Pop-Eyes, "he called the Police about a half an hour ago, confessed that he had committed some crime years ago, and was an escaped convict. He told them to come to the Weston Tower Hotel, that he'd be waiting in the lobby to surrender to 'em." Pop-Eyes paused to shudder. "I guess he couldn't stand the thought of going back to prison, so he plugged hisself just as the cops walked in the lobby."

SUDDENLY Lance Randell knew that he had to get away from that circle. He fought his way back through the crowd, feeling that he might succumb to nausea at any moment. The voices all around him were still floating to his consciousness. "What's happened to this town?" "It's the end of the world." "Terrible, out in the streets, rioting." "I saw a little child . . . killed . . ."

Randell found a telephone booth, managed to push inside. With a hand

that trembled slightly, he fished through his pockets until he found a nickel. Then he was dialing Professor Merlo's number. After what seemed like an eternity he heard the old scientist's voice.

"Professor, it's me—Lance. I ." he was cut off by the sharp voice on the other end of the wire.

"Yes," he heard Merlo saying, "I know all about it. Got it all through news flashes. We haven't any time to lose. Have to act quickly. Where are you?"

"At the Weston Towers, but—" Kendall began.

"Stay there," Merlo continued, "I'll meet you as quickly as possible. Every moment that this gas stays over the city means more lives. I think I've hit on a solution."

"How? What?" Randell began. Then he cursed. Merlo had hung up.

What did the old man mean? What possible solution could there be? They had no anti-toxin to the gas. They knew that it would wear off in twenty-four hours, of course, but in twenty-four hours—. He shuddered at the thought of what was in store for Weston if the gas held that long!

A feeling of utter hopelessness, complete futility came over Randell as he stepped back into the lobby of the Weston Towers. Another twenty-four hours before the gas would drift from the city. Twenty-four hours in which hell would rage unchecked! The thought was staggering. Foolishly, it occurred to him that he was suffering the same emotions that Dr. Frankenstein had known upon creating his monster.

Then and there his heart went into a sickening tailspin. He had forgotten about Edie! If this bedlam was going to continue throughout Weston, no one would be safe. He had to get her out of the city, had to get her to safety while there was still time. Desperately, Randell began to push back through the crowded lobby toward the elevators.

CHAPTER V

Lance Gets a Shock

PROFESSOR MERLO waited a moment after hanging up on Lance Randell. Then he picked up the telephone again and dialed a number. As the receiver buzzed in his ear he drummed his fingers impatiently on the table, staring out the window at the darkening skies.

"It should work," the old man muttered to himself. "It has to work." Then he heard a voice on the other end of the wire.

"Weston Contractors," said the voice.

Merlo began speaking excitedly, emphatically, allowing his listener no time for interruptions. After several minutes he concluded, "Is everything straight? It's a question of time. I want them there as quickly as possible."

"Certainly, Professor," was the reply. "I understand. We'll get them there as fast as is humanly possible. But such an enormous load of sand, I can't imagine what you intend—"

"Damn you," shouted Merlo, his face purpling, "you don't have to imagine. All you have to do is get them there, and get them there in a hurry!"

"Yes, Professor," the voice was startled, "never fear. They'll be there on time."

Merlo slammed the instrument back on its cradle and stood up. He seized his hat from the top of a bookcase and stamped out of the room. A few moments later he was turning his black sedan out of his garage and onto the highway leading to Weston. Then he pushed the accelerator down to the floorboards. . . .

Less than a mile from the Weston Tower Hotel, a pretty, red-headed young girl was being swept along by the semi-frantic crowds thronging the business district. For the first time since she dashed tearfully from the offices of Lance Randell Enterprises, over an hour ago, Doris Martin was becoming aware of the frenzied hysteria gripping the city.

Despair at what she said to the man she loved had driven her into the streets, made her wander about aimlessly, until finally, Doris Martin knew what she had to do. And she was going to do it. No one on earth could stop her.

People were passing her, crowds elbowed by, the ordinary hum of the city increased to a tone approaching an angry howl, but Doris walked on, scarcely conscious of anything but the pavement beneath her feet. Where she was going, how long she'd been walking, nothing made any difference.

"Watch where ye're goin', sister!"

Doris had a confused vision of a fat red face peering angrily at her. A sweaty, shirt-sleeved fellow in a sailor straw had wrapped his pudgy hand around her arm and jerked her backward. Her first instinct was one of anger, and she started to speak.

"Ya wanna get kilt?" The fat man was pointing to the cars rushing by in the street, and then Doris realized that they were standing on the curbing, that the fat fellow had pulled her out of the path of the automobiles hurtling past them.

Her ears were torn by the screech of hastily applied automobile brakes. Out of the corner of her eye she saw a black sedan jolting to an abrupt stop. Terrified, she stood rooted in the center of the street.

"Good God, girl," someone shouted. "I might have killed you!" Doris saw that it was the driver of the sedan, and that he was climbing out of his car. The driver was walking over to her now, his face white, jaws shut.

"Doris!" The driver stopped short in shocked amazement.

IT was then that she recognized Professor Merlo. He had her by the arm, was propelling her to his car and talking rapidly. "What are you doing here? Life isn't safe anywhere in Weston. You must be mad to be roaming the streets while this turmoil is raging. Don't you know, haven't you seen it?"

They were in Merlo's sedan now, once more moving along in the stream of traffic. Doris found her voice at last. "Where are you going, Professor? What, what has happened to the city?"

"Plenty," Merlo snapped. "We're going to the Weston Towers. Lance is there, waiting for me. There's a lot to be done. Can't explain it all now."

At the mention of Lance, Doris paled. "Good!" she said firmly. "I was on my way there. I've a little business of my own there."

"Not with Lance, I suspect?" said Merlo, looking at her with less surprise than he might have.

"No," Doris' voice was amazingly different. "I'll tend to that—"

Suddenly the little black sedan shot across an intersection at the same moment that a lumber truck came hurtling through from the side street. It was too late for Merlo to swing the sedan out of its path. The sickening, futile squealing of brakes preceded the rending crash of a side-on collision. In the blackness that was closing around him, Merlo heard a woman scream. . . .

IT had only been his dogged determination that enabled Lance Randell to get Edie Dalmar to leave her apartment. At first she was coyly amused at his insistence that she dress and leave

with him immediately. Then, as she began to notice the unsmiling set to his mouth, the feverish gleam in his eyes, she became a little frightened and decided to humor him.

They stepped out of the elevator into the lobby and Randell looked swiftly through the crowd in an effort to see if Merlo had arrived yet. Edie tugged at his sleeve.

"Jus' what is this heah all about, daahling?" she demanded.

Randell tore his eyes from the crowd. Wordlessly he took her arm, piloting her across the room to a quiet corner. They found a lounge.

"What's this all about?" repeated Edie, her voice oddly different in accent. She jerked her arm out of his grasp.

"Look, Honey," he began in a rush of words. "As I said before. Something terrible has happened to the city. I can't tell you any more than that for the present. You'll have to trust me. It isn't safe in Weston any more, and I'm going to get you out of here as soon as Merlo comes!"

Edie's starry eyes narrowed perceptibly. "Have you gone daffy?"

Lance Randell groaned. Then, remembering Edie had seen nothing of the effects of the gas, hadn't even heard of it yet, he made another effort to explain.

"Listen, Darling. Weston is a city suddenly gone mad. Something has happened. It's no longer safe to go out into the streets. Business is being ruined. Financial houses are collapsing. Lives are being taken recklessly. You must understand me, you have to believe me. If this keeps up, dear, everything will be ruined. It begins to look like you'll have to keep your promise about marrying me even if I were a pauper." Lance stopped abruptly. Edie was staring at him strangely.

"What's that you just said?" she demanded frigidly.

"I said that all business is being ruined. It means that all my investments will be wiped out if this continues, that I'll be a pauper," said Lance in confusion.

"Are you sure of that?" Her tone was like an Arctic breeze.

"I'm afraid so." Randell had pushed his hat back on his forehead and was staring in amazement at the expression that crossed Edie's face.

"Then," said Edie deliberately, "you might as well get out of my sight, you boob. Do you think for a minute that I have any time for a pauper. Why, you sap, all I ever wanted was your dough. This little gal looks out for herself. If you haven't got the bankroll I can get a guy that has." She was standing up now, looking scornfully at him. "Excuse me, chump. I'm leaving. Don't bother to come again!"

Feeling as if he had just been thoroughly gone over by a steam roller, Randell sat gazing in aching astonishment at Edie's retreating back.

CHAPTER VI

Sand—And Rain

FOR a time Lance Randell was unable to do anything more than stare dumbly into space. Edie Dalmar's sudden change had affected him just as forcibly as a left hook to the jaw, leaving him dazed, uncomprehending, paralyzed. His first reactions were those of hurt and bewilderment, bitterness and heartbreak. Then reason began to return, and with it the demand for an explanation of her actions.

She undoubtedly was acting under the effects of the gas, he was certain of that much. But why hadn't she spoken the truth when he talked to her in her apartment? Why didn't the gas

influence her until they were down in the lobby?

Suddenly Randell looked at his watch. He remembered at that moment that Merlo should be somewhere in the lobby. The Professor had had more than enough time to get there. His personal troubles vanished as he realized once more that as every moment passed Weston was coming closer and closer to the brink of utter madness. And then, as he glanced in the direction of the revolving doors at the hotel entrance, he gasped.

A grotesque caricature of a man was entering. On his head was a battered fedora, mashed down over wild white hair and a blood-caked brow. His suit was literally ripped to shreds, the left pants leg torn off at the knee, and the coat sticky with oil and blood. He looked wildly about for an instant—

Randell gasped again, "Professor Merlo!"

In several swift strides Randell was at the old man's side. He threw an arm around his waist and half-carried him over to a couch. "Wasn't sure I'd make it," Merlo said faintly. "There was an accident. Truck. Hit me from the side. Doris, Doris Martin was in the car with me. I must have been out cold for five minutes. When I came around, she was gone. Couldn't look for her. Came the rest of the way by cab. Had to tell you. We must work fast!"

"Where is Doris—" But Randell stopped, fighting to drive all other thoughts from his mind. One thing alone was more important than any others. "Remember you said you'd found a solution?"

"Yes," Merlo said quietly. "It's in the weather."

Lance Randell felt suddenly sick inside. The old man was out of his head, delirious from the accident. His mouth felt dry, and all at once he knew it was all over.

They were beaten. There would be no solution. The one chance of saving the city was in the Professor's plan. And that plan had evidently been jarred from the old man's mind in the collision. Automatically he listened, while the Professor went on:

"Did you notice the weather?"

"No," Randell said, trying to keep the bitterness from his voice.

"Rainclouds," said Merlo, "huge formations of them above Weston. I called the weather bureau. But the rain isn't expected until evening. Then it will be too late. We can't wait for evening, Lance. We must have rain, now. Evening will be too late." The Professor stopped, and looked at Lance strangely. "My God, Lance, don't you see what I'm getting at? Do you think I'm out of my head? Rain! Rain! It'll save us, man. Remember your elementary chemistry! The rain will destroy our Truth Gas, will disintegrate its molecular formation! Water can do that to gas, don't you see?"

There was life once more in Randell's expression, hope in his eyes as he spoke. Gone was his conviction that Merlo was babbling. "Good Lord, I see what you mean, Professor! But you said that rain isn't expected until evening—"

"That's what I said," agreed Merlo, "but we're going to *make rain,* Lance. Now!"

Randell was visibly perplexed, but he waited while Merlo continued.

"I've ordered sand," said the Professor, "twelve trucks of it. They should be at the Weston Airport this minute. I've hired airplanes. They're the type used in spraying vegetation and smoking orchards. Those planes are going to fly above the raincloud formations. They're going to *bomb* the

clouds, with sand!" *

"But—"

"With sand!" repeated Merlo. "The sand will shatter the cloud formations, release the rain on the city immediately!"

LANCE RANDELL was on his feet. "You say the planes and the sand are waiting at the Airport?"

Merlo nodded. "I'd planned that we both go to the field. It will make it easier if there are two of us to direct the operations."

The youth helped the old scientist to his feet. "Think you'll be okay, Professor?"

"I think so," said Merlo. But his face was a sickening white.

Randell looked quickly at the Professor, indecision crossing his face. At that instant confusion broke forth in the lobby of Weston Towers, signalled by a hoarse shout of terror from the direction of the elevators. Then a woman screamed and every voice in the place became raised in bedlam.

The Professor and Randell wheeled in the direction of this fresh outburst. People were rushing back and forth in front of a corner elevator like so many frightened chickens. They seemed desperately eager to get away from that particular spot.

Then they saw the cause of the terror, a mousey little man who was standing alone in the elevator, shouting hysterically. The fellow had one hand on the controls and the other was clutching a small, vial-like object.

"Going up, going up, going up," his voice carried to where Randell and Professor Merlo were standing.

"Good Lord," someone cried, "stop him before it's too late."

"Get the Manager," a woman was screaming. "He wants to kill himself."

Lance cursed in anguish. Another one. He struggled through the retreating crowds until he stood behind a cordon of the more courageous spectators, some twenty feet from the elevator row. Merlo had followed directly behind him.

"Get back," the bespectacled little fellow in the elevator was shouting. "Get away from here, all of you, unless you want to come with me!"

The man peered owlishly at the crowd through the thick lenses of his glasses, raising the object in his hand aloft. "This is nitroglycerine! It can blow us all to eternity! *Stand back!*"

Instinctively, the row in front of Lance and Merlo surged back. Lance turned to Merlo. "It's another suicide attempt!"

The little man was shouting at the crowd again. "I'm going up through this roof. Up in a blaze of glory. Glory, for the first time in my miserable life! I've been kidding myself too long. My worthless hide doesn't mean a thing in the scheme of things, and all the time I've been a miserable failure, a fraud. But this morning I stopped lying to myself. Now I'm going out—out and up—with this nitro in my hand! Who wants to come along, eh? Who wants to come along?"

The Professor put a hand to his head, wiping away beads of perspiration. He looked at Randell. "There's nothing we can do about it."

"Good God," Randell cried, "we can't let him kill himself. It's our fault if he dies!" His voice had become anguished, impassioned, and Merlo placed

* Nothing is so tantalizing to drought sufferers as rainclouds which, because of some peculiar quirk in atmospheric conditions, refuse to precipitate rain. In the Southwestern section of the country, considerable success in the past was achieved by airplanes which sprayed or "bombed" with sand stubborn rainclouds above drought-stricken crops or sun-baked city streets. Action of the sand on the clouds released the rain.—Ed.

a quieting hand on his arm.

"Steady, Lance. We couldn't foresee all this. There's nothing we can do about it. Every minute we stand here means at least ten such similar deaths throughout the city. Our duty is at the Airport. Let's get out of here, immediately."

Suddenly Lance Randell trembled. Then he quieted.

"You're right. Sorry. Let's get going!" He turned, pushing back through the crowd, when he noticed that Merlo was not moving. The Professor stood frozen motionless, staring in astonishment at the elevator.

"Going up! Going up!" Randell heard the demonical little man chanting. He also heard a gasp from the crowd, heard Merlo mutter a familiar name incredulously. Randell spun around to face the elevator.

"Doris!" the name tumbled from his lips in horror, for from a side entrance to the lobby Doris Martin was walking in a direct line toward the madman's elevator!

In the brief agonized glimpse Lance Randell had of the girl he could see instantly that something was wrong. She walked with the measured step of a sleepwalker, her face blank, eyes unseeing. And in the shocked hush that fell over the lobby he heard her muttering almost inaudibly.

"Lance Randell, you're a fool. A fool." She seemed to be sobbing. "I love you, Lance. She'll never take you . . ."

"GOING *up! Going up!"* The wild cry of the maniac rang out through the sudden silence like an unclean cackle. He swung the grilled doors of the elevator open momentarily, and in that instant Doris Martin, unseeingly, stepped inside the cage.

"Ha—ha! Going up, sister! Glad you're coming along!"

As the elevator door clanged shut Lance Randell's mind became a crimson blot. With an animal snarl he lashed out at the bodies that had blocked his way to the elevator, beating a path before him, hurling himself through the opening. He didn't notice Merlo barging along behind him. He didn't notice anything but the cage with the little suicide and the dazed young girl.

A wild laugh came from the tiny cage, and Randell shouted as he saw it start upward. The light above the door flickered white. Merlo was beside Randall by this time, grabbing him by the arm. He wheeled as he felt the old man's fingers digging into his sleeve.

"What in the hell are we standing here for?" Randell yelled. "Doris is in that elevator, and by God I'm going after her!"

"Get a grip on yourself, Lance," Merlo's fingers dug deeper into his arm and his voice was low, fierce. "Remember what I told you, man. For every moment that we're delayed from the Airport, something like this happens somewhere else in Weston. We've wasted too much time already!"

The Professor's voice brought calm back to Randell—calm and agony at the full import of the situation. "Professor," he muttered shakily, "Doris will be blown to eternity. I have to follow!"

"You'll be sacrificing a hundred lives for one."

Randell looked at the small puddle of blood forming beneath Merlo's leg. "Can you make it alone, Professor?"

"You love the girl?" The Professor's voice was soft.

"Yes . . . I never realized . . ." said Randell, and he realized with bitter irony that the Truth Gas was at work once more.

Merlo held out his hand. "I'll make it, Lance, somehow. God give you luck,

lad, and speed!" Then the Professor was gone, moving unsteadily off through the crowds. The open door of an adjoining elevator caught Randell's eye and he stepped toward it without hesitation.

"Don't be a fool," snapped a voice directly behind him.

Lance Randell wheeled to see a tall, broad shouldered fellow standing behind him. "Keep out of that elevator. Get back into the crowd. There's a lunatic loose in an elevator with a vial of nitroglycerine. We're clearing the lobby."

"Thanks," Randell grated, "for the information!" As he spoke his fist swung simultaneously. The efficient-looking young gentleman went down heavily. The elevator doors closed with a wild clang.

Lance Randell grabbed the controls of the car, throwing them forward instantly. In his heart was the horrible fear that he'd wasted too much time, that he would be too late. The car lurched forward from the quick start, then shot upward. From the moment when he first spied the insane operator in the elevator, something had been hammering at the back of his consciousness. It seemed to hinge, somehow with Edie Dalmar. And now, with every second holding the answer between life and death, he racked his brain in an effort to hit upon a plan.

HE knew that his only hope of stopping the suicide,, saving Doris, lay in that elusive subconscious discovery. He glanced swiftly about the narrow confines of the cage, mentally thanking God that it was not one of the modern, room-type elevators enclosed on all sides. Instead, the upper-half of the walls were merely spaced iron grillwork, making it possible to see across the shaft from one elevator to another.

He peered out through the grill. With a silent prayer of thanks he saw that the cables in the adjoining shaft were moving slowly.

"He's taking his time," he muttered. "If I can catch the car before he drives it through the roof I—" Suddenly the elusive plan that had been hiding in his subconscious was crystallized for Randell. He had it.

Of course! The Truth Gas didn't carry to the upper floors of the hotel. It was a heavier than air substance. That accounted for Edie being unaffected by it when she was in her apartment!

His plan was clear in his mind, now. He knew that his one chance of saving Doris lay in forcing the lunitic to the upper floors of the Hotel without discharging the nitro. Once above the gas, the little man would return to normality, would listen to reason.

The little car shot past the twenty-fifth floor. Five floors more and Randell caught a glimpse of the understructure of his quarry's elevator.

Face taut, Randell began to slow his own cage. Three seconds, and he was adjoining the death car. He threw his controls back to stop.

"Ha!" He could see the crazed little man turn from where he stood at the controls of the car. He peered through the grillwork at Randell.

Suddenly the suicide's voice cackled, "So you want to come along, too?"

His eyes sweeping desperately across the car in an effort to see Doris, Randell called, "Where's the girl?"

The little man glanced downward in devilish amusement. "She's lying on the floor. Passed out a moment after we started up."

Randell was talking rapidly, "You can't take that girl to her death. For the love of heaven, man, she has nothing to do with you or your life. Let

her out!"

Another hysterical burst of laughter from the demented little fellow was the only answer. Randell opened his mouth to speak, when the other car began to ascend once more. Cursing, he threw the controls forward again.

"32" flashed by.

"33" dropped past. "36" faded by, and cold sweat trickled off Randell's forehead, smarting into his eyes. He forced himself to look upward, catching a glimpse of the car above. Suddenly he cursed. Something was wrong.

The other car had come to a stop, and was bobbing between floors. "He's going to drop the nitro," Randell thought desperately. He slowed his tiny cage down until he was beside the other.

Looking across the shaft, he was startled. Neither Doris nor the nitro-man was visible!

Instinctively he called out, "Doris!" The silent elevator shafts echoed and re-echoed his cry.

He set his controls, rushing to the grillwork wall, trying to get a better view of the cage in the opposite shaft. Then he saw them. In one corner of the elevator Doris was lying face downward. In the front, next to the controls, the madman was stretched out flat on his back. Next to his open hand was the vial of nitroglycerine—rolling gently back and forth on the floor of the car!

With a numbing sensation of horror, Randell saw that the controls of the car were not set correctly, that they might slip any moment!

Steeling himself, he swept his eyes across the cage in the opposite shaft, looking frantically for some solution to the dilemma. The car was stuck between floors, making it impossible to get to it from a hall door.

Randell realized as much instantly. There was only one other solution, and breathing a silent supplication for time, he set to work on the wall grillwork of his cage.

Precious moments rushed by as he began the laborious effort required to unscrew the thick screen fastenings. It would have been a difficult enough job with tools, but Randell had only his hands, and inside of two minutes they were torn and bleeding.

SOBBING under his breath, knowing that the controls might loosen in the opposite car at any instant, Lance Randell paused only to wipe away the sweat that clouded his eyes. Then at last one side of the screen was loosened.

It was enough. Calling on every last ounce of strength, he pulled backward on the grilling, bending it enough to push his head and shoulders through the scant opening. Hoisting himself up to the ledge where the screening began, he stood teetering, looking down thirty-seven floors of elevator shaft.

He closed his eyes for a moment, grating his teeth against the pain he knew was coming, then seized one of the black, greasy cables with his lacerated hands. It was an almost superhuman act of will that let him swing his feet from the comparatively safe ledge of his own car out into space.

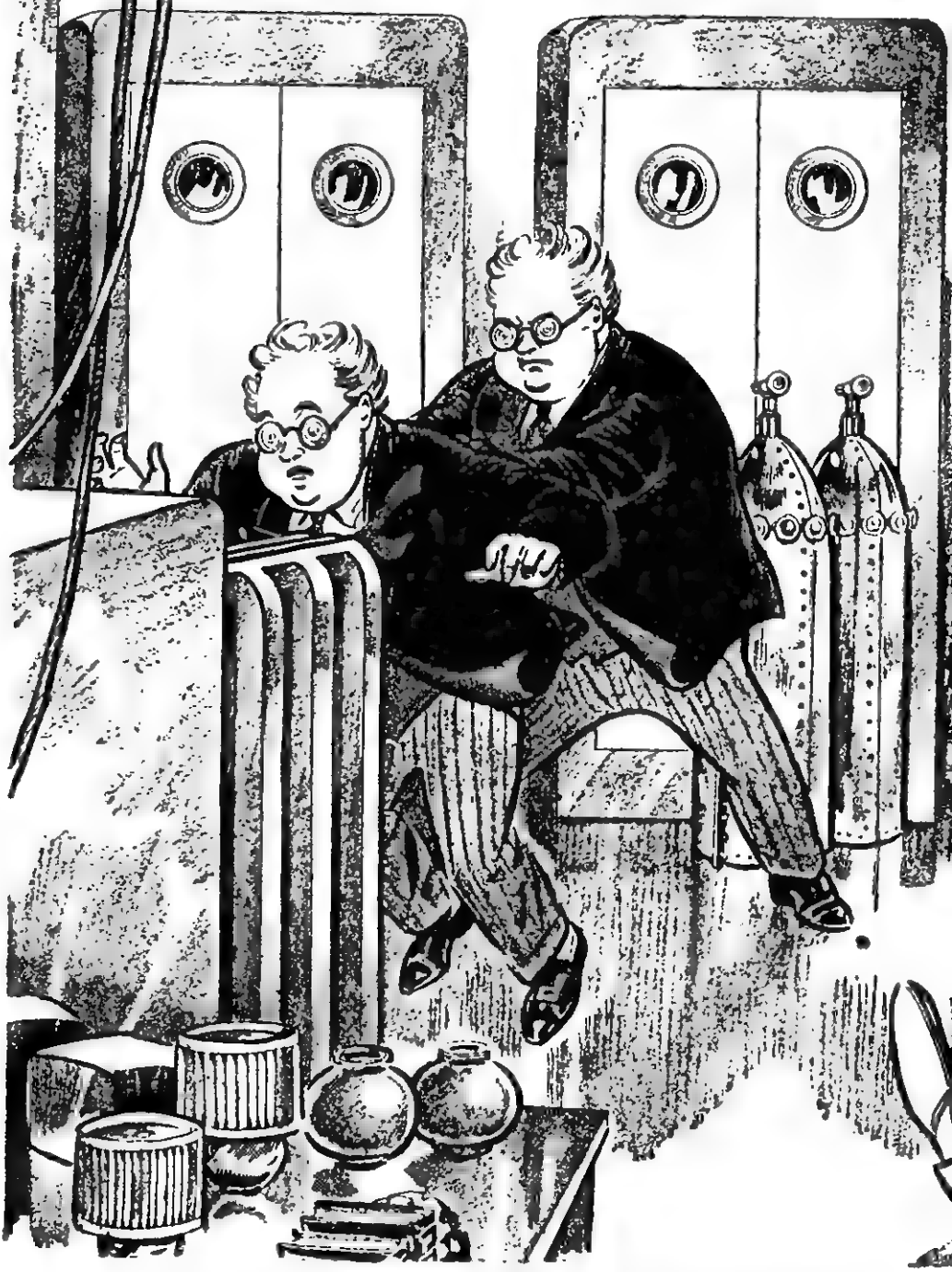
For an agonized second, Randell was sure that his grip on the cable was loosening, that he was going to pitch headlong down the shaft. He wrapped his legs around the huge black coil, hoping to God that the grease wouldn't make such a grip impossible. It was now or never.

One hand lost the cable. The motion made him slide several sickening feet. His hand caught the grilling on the death car, held him there.

With his free hand Randell went to work on the screen fastenings of the

(Concluded on page 129)

The Thirteenth



"Get back in!" commanded Tumps, giving the imposter a shove toward the cabinet

Mr. Tumps

BY RICHARD O. LEWIS

T. Wilton Tumps thought having a double would be a great idea—but when he faced twelve of them . . .

WHEN Mrs. T. Wilton Tumps took leave of her husband that eventful evening to spend a quiet week end with her mother, she hadn't reached the halfway point of her journey, before Mr. T. Wilton Tumps was seated in a booth in a small beer parlor on the corner of 6th and Grady of the suburban town of Gradyville. He had nearly finished his first bottle of beer.

Now Mr. Tumps was strictly not the type of man who rushed to the nearest beer parlor as soon as his wife's back was turned. He —moon-like of face and tummy, short legged, wispy of hair and wearing thick-lensed glasses over his pale eyes—had sat in silent loneliness in the living room for two hours before the idea came.

His mind had drifted back twenty years — to his graduation from the Grady College of Business. Thoughts of the little cafe on 6th and Grady began to fill his mind. He had spent many happy evenings there with the boys. Of course he had never entered actively

into any of their boisterous revelries, but . . . suddenly he wanted to go back. Just for an evening. . . .

In due course of time, he found himself standing on the corner of 6th and Grady.

But the little cafe was no longer a cafe. The tables that had once cluttered the floor had given way to booths along one wall. Along the other wall was a long bar with a mirror behind it and shelves of bottles.

Tumps, slightly confused by the changed surroundings, had slid into one of the booths, and a waiter had placed a bottle of beer and a glass on the table before him.

The little man, being the timid soul he was, could not find it in his heart to quit the place and leave the bottle untouched. There had been no alternative; he had started drinking it.

Now, with the bottle half empty, a new force was flowing through his veins. He was no longer merely a bookkeeper leading a humdrum life, he was a college boy, a rowdy and the life of the party slowly being rolled into one.

He sprinkled salt into his empty glass and tilted the bottle toward it. The beer promptly foamed up and over the rim of the tall glass. T. Wilton Tumps gulped at it quickly lest it spew out all over the table. He poured more beer into the glass. It was salty bitter to the taste. By the time he got the drink to his liking, the bottle was empty. Then came more bottles.

A flood of warm vigor surged up from deep within him with a sudden rush that threatened to blow off the top of his head. The sudden rush dispelled itself into a gigantic hiccup.

"Gosh!" he said.

He got up and slid carefully out of his booth. His legs seemed strangely unsteady and the room had a foolish way of swaying back and forth. He took a step toward the door. At the same instant, the room pirouetted.

TUMPS flung out his arms for support, his fingers clutched empty air and he sat down heavily into the booth next to the one he had just vacated. He sat there blinking across the table into the dark, hollow eyes of a tall man. The man's broad, white forehead was surmounted by somber, black hair. The pupils of his sunken eyes were dilated and the corners of his wide mouth sagged. There was a long row of glasses on the table before him, most of them empty.

Tumps thought he had never before seen such a sorrowful person. "You look sad," he told the man.

"I *am* sad!" The man's voice was slow and vibrant. "Everything I do goes wrong. When I can't stand things any longer, I come here to drown my sorrow."

He shoved a glass across the table from the full end of the row. "I do everything scientifically," he explained. "Through experimentation, I have found the exact number of glasses it takes for the drowning process. Therefore, I get that many full glasses, place them in a row and start at one end."

"My, my!" Tumps said. The content of the glass was pungently sweet to the taste and playful little bubbles kept zipping up and popping him on the end of the nose.

"I'm an inventor," said the man.

"I'm a book . . . er . . . a rowdy." Tumps seemed to be drifting about in a warm, red haze. The waiter brought more full glasses and he found himself taking an active part in his new-found friend's drowning process.

Then a strange and bewildering thing happened to the man across the table. He split in two, drifted apart and became two men who were precisely alike

in every respect even to the sunken, hollow eyes. He commented upon the fact as he struggled to focus the man back to a single entity.

"That's nothing," said the man. "Duplication is a scientific fact. My latest invention has proven it. If we were in my laboratory, *I could make two of you.*"

"Could you?" asked Tumps.

The man nodded and became despondent again. "If only things wouldn't go wrong after twenty. . . ."

The little man wasn't listening. He was grappling with a heaven-sent inspiration. Two of him! Two T. Wilton Tumpses! Why, one of them could go on being just a bookkeeper while the other one, the original T. Wilton Tumps, could continue the pleasant task of being the life of the party, anybody's party.

And no one would ever know! Not even his wife!

SOMETIME later, he found himself in a basement room where oddly shaped lights glowed at him. Tangles of wires lined the walls, several tables were loaded with jumbled mysteries and the floor was cluttered with vases, flower pots and statues.

The vases, flower pots and statues were drawn up into a long, twisted line, and each one of them had a twin standing by its side—except at the far end of the line where there were no twins.

In the center of the room stood two steel cabinets. They, too, were twins.

The tall man did something at the side of one of the cabinets that caused a low hum of power to issue from it and to vibrate through the room. He pointed unsteadily to the cabinet and then to the other. "I putsha in here," he said, "and you come out here."

His lean body sagged to the point of collapse. He took a quick step backwards, caught his balance and drew himself up. "What I mean to shay," he said, "ish that thish cabinet duplishates atomical structure in t'other one."

Tumps decided he had never before heard a clearer and more concise explanation of a scientific principle.

"Thash true," he said, "Lemme in."

The interior of the cabinet was black, hot and stuffy. Strange buzzings were going round and round in the head of T. Wilton Tumps. It seemed ages since the tall man had closed the cabinet door on him. He didn't like it in here. He wanted to be out, wanted to go places and be a rowdy.

Finally, unable to stand it any longer, he pushed open the door and stepped out into the lighted laboratory. At first he couldn't find the tall man. Then he saw him—seated on the floor, his back against the wall and his long legs extended before him. His head rose and fell slowly in peaceful slumber.

Tumps went over and shook him. "Humph!" he said. "Pashed out!"

A slight noise behind him caused him to turn. He stood there staring, for, coming out of the second cabinet, was his exact counterpart.

T. Wilton Tumps was elated. Here before him was his duplicate, the man who, from now on, was to have charge of all life's little drudgeries! The man who was to give him freedom to do the things he had always wanted to do!

Then he peered more closely at the man—and his heart sank. The duplicate's thin hair was mussed, his vest was hanging open, his collar and tie were askew and he was standing there gazing through his thick glasses with a most owlish and bewildered expression.

"You're drunk!" accused Tumps. "I don't want you 'cause you can't do my work when you're drunk. Get back where you belong!" He gave a sudden

shove that sent the bewildered duplicate staggering back into the open door of a cabinet—the cabinet he himself had just vacated a few minutes before.

He locked the cabinet door and wedged a chair against it.

The tall man was still asleep on the floor and the low hum of power was still vibrating through the laboratory.

But Tumps didn't notice.

He was standing in the center of the floor explaining to two lady statues that there was only one good ol' T. Wilton Tumps in the world and that there could never be another one quite like the original.

The room gave a snake-like twist that sent him clutching at one of the ladies for support. Then he stood there blinking his eyes in amazement. The statue had vanished.

"Boy!" said T. Wilton Tumps. "I gotta get out of here!"

LATER that night, Tumps found himself sitting on an overturned toy wagon rubbing a bruised ankle. He had a hazy remembrance of having stumbled over an identical wagon earlier in the night. He shook his head at the wagon. "But you can't be the same one," he told it, " 'cause the other one was four blocks back. You must be twins."

It was then that he saw the figure of a man coming up the dark street toward him. He got up from the wagon and waited.

"My dear shir," he said as the man approached, "can you tell me the correct way to get to 6th and Gra . . . " He stopped short to peer through his glasses. "Shay!" he gasped. "I thought I put you back in the cabinet!"

"You did," said the man, peering back at him. "But I fooled you. I came out the other one."

"You're a duplicate," said Tumps.

"I'm not a duplicate. I'm T. Wilton Tumps!"

"You can't be T. Wilton Tumps," said Tumps stiffly, " 'cause I'm him."

"I'll go back and find out," said the man. He turned and started unsteadily down the street.

It was still later that evening when Tumps found himself on a corner where there were several darkened stores and business buildings. A big man in a blue uniform was standing at the curb idly swinging his club.

"Offisher," said Tumps, "can you tell me where I can find 6th and . . . "

The officer turned quickly. His mouth fell open in surprise, then a black scowl darkened his broad face. "What! You again!" he roared. He put his big hands on his hips and glared down at the disheveled figure before him. "Four times," he accused, "you've stood here on the corner of 6th and Grady and asked me where it is. Four times in the last hour, I've put you on a street car headed for town. And four times you've come back again. What is this? A game!"

"Well, it could be," reasoned Tumps, "but . . . but on the other hand . . . "

The lights of a street car glared down Grady Street.

"I'm going to try you once more," said the officer. "But if you come back this time . . . I'll run you in so help me!"

Tumps made the proper connections down town and mounted the steps of the 47th Street trolley. The car was empty except for the motorman who was about to finish up his night run.

As Tumps entered the door, the motorman stiffened and blinked his eyes several times in quick succession. Then he shook his head slowly.

"Mr. Tumps," he said, "I do wish you would stay home. I've taken you there I don't know how many times

tonight, but, in some way, you always beat me back down town. You must realize that you are . . . well . . . ah . . . not exactly yourself tonight."

Tumps was searching his pockets for something.

"You needn't look for your pass," said the man. "I took the liberty of keeping it when you showed it to me on the last run. I thought that, perhaps, in that way I would prevent . . . "

"Ah, here it ish," said Tumps, drawing the pass from his pocket.

The conductor's mouth sagged open and his face became ashy white as his eyes traveled from the pass in his own hands to the one held out by T. Wilton Tumps. "Why, why they're identical!" he gasped. "They're alike — even to the thumb smudge in the upper right-hand corner!"

"Yes," said Tumps, lurching back for a seat. "The whole world is twins tonight."

TUMPS awakened to find himself sitting bolt upright in bed. His stomach felt weak, and his mouth was arid. He clutched his throbbing head in both hands and groaned audibly as he looked about the room. The guest room! How in the world did he happen to be in the guest room?

A movement at his elbow caused him to turn. He nearly fell out of bed in alarm as he saw his exact duplicate gazing questioningly at him through half-opened, sleepy eyes.

"How did you get here!" gasped Tumps.

"I am T. Wilton Tumps," said the man. "I live here. Who are you?"

"We're not going into *that* again," said Tumps decisively.

Eying each other suspiciously, they both got from bed, dressed, donned their glasses and went into the hall.

The door to Mrs. Tumps' room stood open. The bed had been slept in. So had the bed in Mr. Tumps' room.

They went slowly down the stairs, stopped short at the door of the living room. Seated here and there about the living room was a solemn group of T. Wilton Tumpses. Each was exactly like the other in every respect—except that one wore Tumps' slippers, another his smoking jacket and another his precious new bath robe.

Tumps stepped into the room. "I am T. Wilton Tumps. . . . " He halted abruptly, realizing the man at his side had spoken the same words in unison with him.

He stared about the room a moment, then found a chair and sank wearily down into it.

"You are the sixth ones who have told us that this morning," said the T. Wilton Tumps in the easy chair.

Holding his aching head in his hands, Tumps tried to think.

He went slowly over the hazy events of the night before and found among them a dim recollection of having pushed someone into a cabinet, or had it been just the other way around?

He couldn't quite remember. But one thing was certain: *someone had been pushed into that cabinet and that infernal machine had duplicated that someone over and over again all night while the tall man . . .*

His thoughts shattered suddenly as a step sounded on the porch. His heart congealed into ice and his weak stomach got up slowly and turned over. Cold perspiration beaded out on his forehead. *Mrs. T. Wilton Tumps!* She . . . she had taken an early train home!

The latch clicked loudly through the silence of doom. The outer door opened and closed. Steps came slowly through the hall toward the door of the living room.

Then a sigh of relief went up from

the entire group. There in the door way stood merely another T. Wilton Tumps.

HIS clothes were rumpled and mussed as if they had been slept in. He clutched the door for support as he caught sight of the group.

"Who . . . who are you?" he gasped.

"If you can remember anything about last night," said Tumps of the smoking jacket, "you'll have the answer."

"Why are you so late getting here?" asked another. "It's nearly noon."

The man at the door hung his head and looked sheepishly over his glasses. "I spent the night in jail," he said. "There was an officer on the corner of 6th and Grady . . ."

One Mr. Tumps was wringing his hands. "My wife will be home on the night train," he worried. "All of you will have to go before she . . ."

"Your wife!" cut in another. "What do you mean, your wife!"

"When she gets home," said Tumps of the easy chair, "she'll know I'm her husband. She'll make short work of the rest of you."

"We must send her a telegram," said a Mr. Tumps on the couch. "We must tell her to stay another week. Then we . . ."

"No!" objected Mr. Tumps of the new bath robe. "A telegram would bring her home on the very next train. I know my wife!"

Tumps, the original, felt that his brain was a vast booming, buzzing confusion. He couldn't think straight. All these . . . these T. Wilton Tumpses, claiming they were the originals, claiming his wife. Soon they would be claiming his job, his bank account, his very home!

He lurched to his feet. "Something has got to be done!" he shouted. "We've got to find that inventor! He should be able to . . ."

"Perhaps you remember where he lives," came the hopeful suggestion.

"It's more than the rest of us remember," said another voice.

"We could ask the officer on 6th and Grady," offered Tumps from the couch. "He might know."

"No!" quickly objected the newest arrival. "We had best not bother him."

"We could ask at the cafe." It was T. Wilton Tumps of the new bath robe. "They might remember him, might even know where he lives."

"All cafes selling liquors are closed on Sundays," put in T. Wilton Tumps in the leather chair by the east window.

"We could call at the manager's home." It was the smoking jacket again.

"But we couldn't go as a group," cautioned one Tumps who had no distinguishing feature except that he had lost his glasses somewhere. "People would stare at us."

"I'll go alone," volunteered the slippers.

"No!" said T. Wilton Tumps leaning against the library table. "I don't trust you. For that matter—" He looked about the room from one to another. "For that matter, I don't trust any of you. All of you know that I am original T. Wilton Tumps and, if one of you went alone to find the inventor, you would undoubtedly prejudice him in your own favor, fix it so I . . ."

Then everyone was talking at once.

T WILTON TUMPS, the original, sat in his chair and held his head in his hands, his confused brain shuttling back and forth between morbid thoughts of suicide and murder. He tried to drive the thoughts from him. Anyway, what could he possibly do with a dozen dead bodies?

He wished he had never gone to the

cafe, wished he had never met the tall man.

He shook his head. No use worrying about the past. He had to think of the future, had to think of some way to get rid of the results of his folly. But how?

His wife would be coming home in a few hours now. What would she think? What would she do? All these husbands claiming her. . . .

Tumps found a profound love for his wife soaring up from deep within him. The love grew until it knew no bounds. He had to do something! He had to save her the distress of meeting all these husbands! He would do anything! Anything!

He arose again from his chair. His mind was made up. All eyes of the room turned slowly toward him.

"We all can't stay here," he began. "I know that we all love my wife and that we all want to save her the shock of seeing all of us here in a group. We must make a great sacrifice to that love we have for her. All of us but one must leave, must go far away and never return."

"And, I suppose," said a sarcastic voice, "you will be the one to stay."

"I don't know," said Tumps. He felt weak and all gone inside. Then he drew himself erect, with an air of supreme sacrifice. "We shall leave that entirely to chance. *We shall draw lots!*"

That started an argument that lasted two hours. No one wanted to give up his wife, home, security and everything else and to go out into the cold world and begin life all over again at the age of forty.

But, as evening fell, no one was able to think up a better idea, and all wanted to save the woman they loved.

Two hats were brought. Into one were placed slips of paper numbered from one to thirteen. In the other were also thirteen folded slips of paper—twelve of which were blanks and one of which had on it a round circle of black.

The first hat was passed. Tumps drew number ten. That meant he was to be the tenth to draw a slip of paper from the second hat.

Rules had been carefully written out on a sheet of paper so that there could be no mistake or argument about what each T. Wilton Tumps was to do after the draw.

The one drawing the black circle would be considered the undisputable, original T. Wilton Tumps. To him, the winner, went everything! He would be the one to meet Mrs. Tumps and to escort her home where they, presumably, would live happily ever after.

The losers would leave the house one by one. They would take devious routes to Gradyville where, for the rest of the night, they would search for the inventor.

But if the inventor were not to be found that night, or if it were beyond his power to remedy the situation, then the losers were to leave the city, go as far away as the few dollars in their pockets would permit—and never return.

Number nine drew. He opened his slip, went suddenly white and slumped down again to the couch, the slip of paper fluttering to the floor.

Then Tumps, the original, found himself approaching the hat. He seemed to be in a daze. His legs trembled and his knees threatened to give way at any moment.

His fingers reached into the hat. There were only four slips of paper left—and among them was the one with the black circle, the one that offered life and love and peace.

A slip of paper was between his groping fingers. He drew it from the hat.

His fingers were trembling so violently that the paper dropped to the floor. He picked it up, fumbled with it, got it open at last.

Tumps felt the blood drain from his face. His legs turned to water and his head went floating away on a tumultuous sea. The world went as blank as the paper in his trembling fingers.

"I've got it!" It was number eleven, the one in the new bath robe, that had just made the draw. He held the slip of paper up so all might see. His moon-like face was radiant; but his eyes were blinking mistily. "I've got it! I am the real T. Wilton Tumps!"

He was, by far, the happiest man in the room.

DARKNESS had settled over the troubled home of T. Wilton Tumps. The crowd in the living room had thinned noticeably. There were only four left. The others had gone out into the night one by one at intervals of five minutes according to plan.

Tumps went slowly out of the house and down the front steps. In the street, he turned to look back at the house he had bought fifteen years ago and on which he had just made the final payment last year. He sighed heavily. He would never see the house again.

The first time his wife had left him in the fifteen years they had been married—and he had done this. He shook his head slowly from side to side and walked sadly down the dark, lonely street. What a terrible price to pay for one night of folly!

An hour later, he was still walking. Aimlessly. His life had no point to it now, no meaning. For the rest of his days he would wander like this—a lone, forlorn and dejected shell. The thought of it was almost too great for him to bear.

Then he stopped short. The inventor! The inventor would certainly know who the original was, would certainly be able to do something about it. He must find him! He would search the whole night through, would visit every house in Gradyville until he found that basement laboratory.

He consulted his watch —10:45— and the sadness returned. In just twenty minutes the train would be pulling into the down town station. In just twenty minutes *she* would be in the arms of . . .

Thoughts of her predominated his brain, drove out all else. He must see her! Must see her once more before going out alone into the cold world.

He almost ran to the corner drug store two blocks down the street. He fumbled a nickel from his pocket, dropped it into the telephone and called for a taxi to pick him up.

Tumps did not know it, but exactly eleven other T. Wilton Tumpses, scattered widely through the neighborhood, had thought up precisely the same idea. Each of them had called a cab. Each wanted to feast his eyes once more upon Mrs. Tumps before leaving the city once and for all.

The taxi pulled up to the station platform just as the train was snorting and wheezing to a stop.

Tumps, number eleven, was hurrying expectantly along the platform toward the train steps.

Tumps, the original, drew further back into the shadows of his cab lest he be seen.

In the other cabs along the platform, other Tumpses also drew back into the shadows.

Then he saw her. She was coming down the train steps, a heavy suit case held lightly in one hand, a basket in the other. How beautiful she was, he thought. How efficient she looked! How . . . how statuesque!

NUMBER ELEVEN, the winner, took the heavy suit case from her hand, kissed her and started happily down the platform, his arm locked in hers.

Tumps closed his eyes tightly to shut out the sight of them. He wished he hadn't come. Leaning forward, he tapped the driver of the cab on the shoulder. He could stand it no longer. He must get away from here. Get away. . . .

It was then that he heard the stentorian scream that came from the direction of the platform. He knew that voice. It toppled him from the cab. In the fraction of an instant, he was racing toward her.

She stood there stiffly, her mouth open for another sirenic blast. The suit case lay on the platform where it had fallen. Number eleven was nowhere to be seen.

The sight of Tumps rushing toward her, muffled the impending blast to a half-choked cry of amazement. She passed her hand over her eyes. "I don't know what happened to me," she sobbed as he reached her side. "I had the strangest feeling. I thought you disappeared into thin air right by my side."

T. Wilton Tumps was excited. Somehow, words tumbled out. "The trip . . . The ride on the train . . . You're tired . . . Excited. . . ."

Suddenly Mr. and Mrs. T. Wilton Tumps found themselves in the center of an irate group of taxi-drivers. Each of the drivers was claiming vociferously that this little man in the business suit and the thick glasses had hired a cab to bring him to the station and had not paid the hire. They demanded settlement.

Mrs. T. Wilton Tumps set her basket down, drew herself up to her full height and glared at them. "Preposterous!" she snapped. "Willie certainly could not have hired all of you to bring him here! What nonsense! Now clear out of here before I . . ."

They went. Not even taxi-drivers were foolish enough to argue with a woman who squared her shoulders like that.

IN a basement laboratory near 6th and Grady, a nervous T. Wilton Tumps sat staring across a table at a dark-haired man with hollow eyes.

"You've kept me here all day," he was lamenting. "You've got to let me go now. It is exactly time for my wife to get to the station. I must meet her."

"Someone will meet her," said the inventor. "I knew when I found you locked in the cabinet this morning that you were a duplicate."

"But why are you keeping me here?" demanded T. Wilton Tumps.

"Everything I have duplicated in that cabinet," explained the inventor, "has dematerialized in exactly twenty-four hours after duplication—flower pots, vases, statues, everything. That is why I went to drown my troubles last night and found you.

"Now that I have duplicated a living man, I want to see if you will behave in the same manner. I want to be sure. . . ."

But the inventor was talking to thin air. There was no longer a T. Wilton Tumps across the table from him. There was only a scattered group of atoms that had suddenly found themselves free again.

Browny arms lifted Hurkan as though he were a child, and hurled him over the rail

R. Fuqua-

Sons of the Deluge

BY NELSON S. BOND

Intrigue and treachery sweep the Atlantean city as the day of the Deluge draws near, and Duke Callion battles to avert an ancient tragedy.

PART TWO OF A TWO-PART SERIAL

(See Page 88 for Synopsis of Part One)

IT WAS Duke who rallied his friends out of the despair which had engulfed them. He stood up determinedly and faced the others.

"Well, so what?" he demanded. "It's not going to take us a whole year to get to Aztlan, is it? We've still got a few months to get there and warn your people, Quelchal. All this means is that we must move—and move at once."

His words put new hope into the Atlantean's heart. Quelchal forced a smile to his bloodless lips.

"You put me to shame, Duke Callion," he said in a quiet voice. "You—a modern American—have taught me to be a man. Yes, we must move—and swiftly. Lucan, everything can be prepared for our immediate departure?"

"Within the hour!" promised the priest, and left the room hurriedly. Quelchal turned to Duke again.

"And you, my friend? You are prepared to go."

"I suppose so," said Duke gloomily. "But—"

Quelchal asked softly, "Pyrrha?"

Duke's flush answered him. But before he had time to speak, a slim, white-clad figure raced into the room to toss herself, sobbing, into Duke's astonished arms. It was Pyrrha herself.

SYNOPSIS OF PART ONE

SOUGHT by the Mexican government for participation in a rebel uprising, American soldiers-of-fortune "Duke" Callion and his stuttering comrade, Joey Cox, seek refuge in the obscure town of Chunhubub on the Yucatan peninsula.

There they meet a mysterious white stranger named Quelchal. Quelchal's haughty mannerisms antagonize the natives, who attack the gringo *trio. They escape to Quelchal's abode where, temporarily free of their foes, Duke and Joey find themselves more and more bewildered by their new friend.*

Not only are there many inexplicable souvenirs of an ancient civilization among Quelchal's possessions, but the manner of the man himself is a strange admixture of hauteur, pride, and contempt for present day life. The reason for his odd behavior is revealed when he tells them, proudly, "I am an Atlantean!"

Pressed for further explanation, Quelchal spins a wild, fantastic tale. He boasts of a vast culture emanating from the island of Atlantis, a widespread civilization of which the Yucatan peninsula was once part. In that day, he tells, he was viceregent of the colony at Mayapan.

He explains how, while leading an exploration into the bowels of a nearby mountain, he was trapped by a landslide, engulfed in a state of catalepsy by noxious gases, to be released thousands of years later—in the present era.

Grief-stricken by the knowledge that Atlantis is no more, Quelchal turns his great knowledge to the accomplishment of a plan fantastic but feasible. He shows his astonished friends an invention, a time ship. In this he plans to return to the Atlantis of 12,000 years before, warn the islanders of the impending disaster, save their culture for ages to come, thus altering the history of mankind! He invites Duke and Joey to join him in this magnificent adventure.

As they hesitate, trouble strikes. Federal troops and enraged natives storm their refuge. A battle ensues, and when defeat seems inevitable the three friends take the last chance offered them. They escape—into Time!

The time ship makes a successful journey, but upon "landing" is wrecked due to geological inequalites unallowed for in their haste. The three are seized by Mayapan soldiers led by the warrior-priest, Hurkan, whose enmity Duke Callion earns.

Before a court of justice, Hurkan testifies falsely against them, and they are condemned to sacrifice on the altar of the sun god, Ray moe. A friendly priest, Lucan, intercedes unsuccessfully on their behalf. But at the crucial moment, stammering Joey Cox awes the Atlantean colonists into accepting them as gods. Hurkan flees

Free at last to continue their journey, they plan with Lucan for an ocean trip to Atlantis while Duke falls in love with Lucan's niece, Pyrrha. Chance discussion of the time at their disposal reveals a new and unexpected danger. Duke remembers the Quiche legend of the Deluge, which says the cataclysm occurred in the Atlantean year 4008. This brings a gasp of horror from his listeners. Duke says,

"But I don't understand. Is there something wrong?"

Lucan echoes, "Wrong!" hollowly, and the Atlantean, Quelchal, raises his head to answer Duke with a great bitterness.

"More than that, Duke Callion! It means our trip is a failure. For the Atlantean year 4008 is—this year!"

"Duke!" she cried, "Duke Callion! My uncle has told me. You are leaving! Take me with you! Ah, do not go and leave me behind. Take me!"

Duke tried to pry her loose tenderly, but there was a strange lump in his throat. He said, chokingly,

"Pyrrha—I can't—we can't—"

And then, astonishingly, Quelchal said, "Why not, Duke Callion? There is room for the girl aboard. And—these things can be arranged easily and swiftly."

Duke said hoarsely, "Don't fool me, Quelchal! I don't feel like joking!"

"Joking? I do not joke in times of stress, Duke Callion." Quelchal lifted the girl's head with infinite gravity. "You want to go with us, Pyrrha? You want never to be separated from this man?"

There was a sudden glory in the girl's eyes that humbled Duke oddly.

"Never!" she said in a ringing voice.

"And you, Duke Callion? You, too, want this?"

"More than anything on earth," Duke said simply.

"Then," said Quelchal, "you twain are mated in the eyes of the Gods, and I, Quelchal, Viceroy of the Atlantean colony of Mayapan, do bless this union! When Lucan returns he will sanctify it! And—" with one of his rare smiles

he added, "—may peace and happiness attend you!"

"Y-y-you said it!" came a voice from the doorway, and Joey Cox entered. He stared at the sober trio thoughtfully. "Hey, what's g-g-going on here? It sounds like a wedding ceremony!"

"It is," grinned Duke. "Joey, in the words of the world we left behind us—meet the wife!"

Joey stammered, "W-w-well, I'll be damned! Lucan told me outside that we were preparing to go on a dangerous quest. But he didn't tell me *how* d-d-dangerous!"

CHAPTER XI

Atlantis

THE slim ship rolled gently in the trough of the sea. Before them, as far as the eye could see, was water. Behind them was a receding patch of green, now nebulous with distance. The sun was like a great bronze disc hanging over them. Not a cloud marred the brilliant turquoise of the sky.

Joey Cox turned. He had been looking backward to the mainland. Now, as the ship dipped into a valley of white-capped emerald, he sighed.

"W-w-well, that's that! You know, Duke, I kind of h-h-hated to leave that place. I liked it!"

Duke didn't take his hands off the wheel. There was no need to. Pyrrha fitted snugly into the circle of his arms as he guided the white-sailed vessel eastward. He smiled,

"Cheer up, Joey. We'll return one of these fine days. After we've finished our mission."

Joey snorted, "Yeah, that's all right for y-y-*you* to say! You brought one of the n-n-nicest things in Mayapan along with you! But *me*—" He sighed wistfully. "You know, Duke, I *enjoyed* being a big-shot there. Mayapan was the swellest place you and I ever visited. Excepting for H-h-hurkan."

From the prow of the boat, Quelchal heard him and turned to glower darkly.

"You need concern yourself no longer with Hurkan, Joey. His life is forfeit when Lucan finds him."

"Funny he hasn't found him already," mused Duke. "Where might he be hiding, Quelchal?"

"Many places. In the jungles. The mountains of the peninsula. Anywhere. But wherever he is, he will return no more to Mayapan."

"And good riddance!" breathed Duke. Then, as he felt his bride of but a few hours shiver in his arms, he said solicitously, "Cold, Pyrrha? It *is* chilly out here on the water. Wait. I'll bring you a wrap."

He ducked down the companionway. An instant his footsteps clattered on the stairs—then his companions on deck heard a loud, amazed shout.

"Hey, speak of the devil! Look what's stowed away on our boat!"

There was the sound of a scuffle, short and swift, then Duke appeared at the head of the companionway dragging behind him a dishevelled figure in crimson robes. All the adventurers surged forward. Pyrrha gasped, and one white hand flew to her lips. Joey gasped,

"The p-p-priest! Hurkan!"

Quelchal moved slowly, but his every movement was pregnant with menace. He strode forward; collared the ash-visaged culprit. In a level voice he said, "It is good! I will take care of him, Duke Callion."

Lean, bronzed cords tensed in his forearms as he marched the quaking ex-priest to the side of the boat. He muttered a few swift words in Atlantean. Hurkan struggled wildly; strove to break that iron grip. But Quelchal, like a great, golden terrier, lifted the quivering rat in his strong arms and—

"Quelchal!" cried Duke Callion.

Quelchal paused; turned his head impatiently.

"Yes, my friend?"

"You—you musn't! We can't kill him like that!"

HURKAN sensed an intercessor. As Quelchal's grip relaxed somewhat, he tore loose from the one time Viceroy; slithered across the deckboards to Duke's feet and groveled there, mouthing frantic pleas. Duke drew back from him, sickened. But he said,

"We just can't kill the man in cold blood, Quelchal. It's not civilized."

Quelchal folded his arms sternly. He said, "Was there mercy in his heart for us, Duke Callion? It is not wisdom to spare an enemy like *this!*"

Joey said, "D-d-duke's right, though, Quelchal. We just can't knock him off in c-c-cold blood." And hopefully—"Of course, if h-h-he'd like to scrap it out—?"

Once again Quelchal grasped the priest by the nape of the neck.

"He is our enemy. More than that, he aspires to the favor of your woman, Duke Callion. Did you not know that was why he was so bitterly turned against us during the trial?"

Duke said, "Is that right, Pyrrha?" and the girl nodded mutely. For an instant Duke's jawline hardened and he was tempted to let Quelchal have his way with the grovelling Hurkan. Then his inborn American spirit of fair play won over his emotions. He said, "Nevertheless, he's defenseless now. Let him live. There are four of us to watch him."

Hurkan understood. In a paroxysm of surrender, he writhed at Duke's feet, slobbering over his boots. He raised his voice again and again in pledges of allegiance. Quelchal shrugged and folded his arms.

"So be it, Duke Callion!" he said. "But I fear we will regret this."

And Joey added his warning,

"J-j-just one teeny-weeny regret, and he goes to f-f-feed the sharks!" He added, humorously, "Just as sure as I'm C-c-coxcox, the biggest god in Mayapan!"

Duke said nothing. Already he regretted his own soft-heartedness. But he knew he would do the same thing again, under the same circumstances.

DAYS passed. Fair days and foul days; days when the westerly wind was like the gentle breathing of a maiden's voice; days when howling tempests screamed across the waters to rip at the fabric of their reefed sails with hungry fingers. The mother sea was alternately the mistress of calm and the mistress of passion. Days upon endless days that stretched into weeks. . . .

But inexorably, proudly, gallantly, the slim ship nosed its way through the swelling troughs; ever eastward. Once the adventurers paused at a small island for an overnight rest on solid land, and to refill their water tanks. Once, on the dim horizon, they saw the image of a feather-sailed vessel; tall and proud; towering high above the surface of the water.

Haze, and the indirect sunlight caused that form of mirage known to mariners as "looming." For a brief period it appeared to those in the tiny boat that the larger vessel was within scant furlongs of them. They could see its straining canvas; see, too, the hawkline features of the captain on the poop, and the swarthy mates who paced the runways between the ranks of sweating oarsmen. Three high banks of oars raised, lowered, pulled in unison, and beads of spray followed the shimmering blades. Almost they could hear the groaning of the oars in their locks, and

the sound of the horsehide drum beating the tempo for the crew in the galley. But as swiftly as it had appeared, the mirage faded. Once again the boat was a dot on the horizon.

Quelchal said, "A trireme out of Tyrrhenia. Sailing for Helluland, I suppose."

Joey said, "T-t-tyrrhenia? Would that be Tyre of our t-t-time?"

"Possibly. But not the Tyre of which your Christian Bible speaks. There were seven cities of Tyre. This was the earliest; peopled by colonists from Aztlan."

"And Helluland?" hazarded Duke. "America?"

"The part which you knew as Nova Scotia," replied Quelchal. "A cold land, but a fruitful one."

For the thousandth time since their adventure had begun, Duke was reminded of its weirdness; its almost incredibility save for the fact that—as Joey had once commented—here they were!

He could not help but marvel at the smugness of Twentieth Century savants who, in his school days, had been content to allow that civilization sprang into being ("By spontaneous generation, I suppose," Duke thought wryly) at a spot in history scarce five thousands of years prior to the birth of Christ.

All the evidence was to the contrary. The fact that the Egyptian civilization showed no indications of a slow, tedious, groping development—but had sprung into being overnight, full-fledged and knowledgeable. Now Duke knew that Egypt was one of the Atlantean colonies.

Then there was that remarkable fact —the strange similarities between early Greek and early Mexican, Peruvian and American Indian languages! From his smattering of Atlantean, Duke now recognized that *this* was the mother of all tongues.

So many things! Every civilization under the sun had a legend of a "Deluge"—yet the scientists dismissed these as mere legends of a "small, isolated flood." True! It had been an "isolated" flood, mayhap—but a flood that had erased from the face of the globe the mother-country. Aztlan!

How, in the face of all this evidence, had science so long contrived to decry the existence of Atlantis? Duke did not know. But he *did* know that he was grateful for the combination of circumstances which had enabled him to live through this adventure. And — meet Pyrrha.

DAYS upon endless days. Days that lengthened into weeks. Once a windless spell stilled their sails, letting them drift aimlessly on the face of the swelling tide for three solid days, while Quelchal impatiently gnawed on his fingernails. Once Hurkan, grown more confident now that he had been allotted a special watch, and a time at the wheel, was found drinking surreptitiously out of the too-swiftly emptying water barrels. For that misdeed, Duke had given the ex-priest a good taste of American free-for-all roughhouse. After that, Hurkan attempted no more such tricks, but as he nursed a swollen nose and "moused" eye back to normal, many were the vengeful glances he tossed in Duke Callion's direction. Always in secret, however.

But by and large, harmony reigned on the vessel. To compensate for the sun's brazen outpouring in the daytime, there was the cooling silver of the moon at night. Joey played endless games of solitaire with a deck of cards rapidly losing their colors beneath a smear of grime. Hurkan nursed his grudge, but obeyed his superiors cautiously. Quelchal spent hours of hopeful brooding on the forward deck. And

in the comfort of the lee, Duke Callion and his bride loved and found reason to wish this trip might never end. . . .

Until, one morning standing the dog-watch, Duke Callion's eyes saw a strange phantasm in the interminable blue-green of the dawn-streaked waters. A curious hooked smudge of brown that, rub his eyes as he might, did not disappear. Uncertainly at first, then with growing confidence, he roused the others with his cry:

"Land ho! Land away!"

Sleepy-eyed but hopeful, the others gathered about him. There was long silence as they watched. Brighter grew the sky. Clearer grew the spot of brown.

Clearer . . . until it took form. A form that Duke Callion recognized. He had seen it before . . . in the book of Cosmos, the Mad Monk . . . and in Quelchal's collection of souvenirs from his lost homeland. A great cry ripped from his throat.

"Quelchal! The Crooked Mountain! Colhuacan!"

But Quelchal had fallen to his knees. There were tears of joy and thanksgiving in his eyes, and one word on his lips. "Aztlan!" Hurkan, too, was moved by the sight. He made a swift, cryptic gesture over his right breast and dropped to his knees.

Pyrrha pressed closer to Duke. Joey stood beside him, as ever. And thus they watched, in the first, golden glow of the rising sun, as before them, mysterious, lovely and beckoning, rose from the bosom of the sea the Golden Island of the Hesperides. The Fabulous Isle of Colhuacan. Atlantis!

CHAPTER XII

The Titans

DUKE called, "Hey, Joey—take over for a spell, will you?" and moved forward to where Quelchal stood staring at the green land before them.

Several hours had passed since the sighting of the island empire. Blessed with favorable winds, their tiny craft had made good speed. Not that it was possible to see with fair clarity larger details of the mainland.

Quelchal stirred as Duke came beside him. There was puzzlement in his voice as he said:

"I cannot understand, Duke Callion. It is incredible, but—there appears to be a battle raging!"

Hurkan overheard them and moved forward. Silence fell as the three strove to pierce the thin watery haze. Then:

"Damned if I don't think you're right, Quelchal," said Duke. "It looks to me as if those black ships are bombarding the city."

Hurkan said, "Black ships! Those would be the Titans.*"

Quelchal rapped sharply, "Ridiculous! The Titans were quelled into subjection in my time! Four hundreds of years ago!"

Hurkan sneered belittlingly.

"That was in *your* time. They are a mighty, independent nation now. A state of warfare has existed between Aztlan and Titania for more than three decades." He added indiscreetly, "Perhaps it would be well for the Titans to win, too. They are—"

"Silence!" Quelchal's great, silver-downed hands twisted with the desire to spring themselves at Hurkan's throat. "You see, Duke Callion? Not only a liar, but a traitor as well. We should get rid of him now. Here!"

"Wait," Duke soothed him. "Soon we will be able to turn him over to those

* The legend of the Titans persists through every recognized mythology. Even the Christian bible makes mention of the fact (in the chapter devoted to the Deluge) that "there were Giants in those days."—Author.

who will try him. We don't want his blood on our hands."

Quelchal subsided, grumbling. Hurkan's face had paled before the golden man's anger. Now slow color crept back into it, mottling it unhealthily. He turned and left the two friends.

They scarcely noticed his departure. Both were engrossed in the spectacle be ing enacted before them.

A half score of hulking, black ships, deep-bellied with massive ebon sails, were knotted outside the crescent-shaped harbor of the island empire. Tiny crimson glows in the guts of these craft betold the presence of fires there —fires in which huge balls of pitched tow were being ignited.

THESE burning spheres were deftly manoeuvered into gigantic catapults, mounted on the ships. When the torque was released, the conflagratory mass arced high over the smaller, defending ships in the harbor to fall into the heart of the city of Aztlan. Here and there smoky pillars designated that a firebrand had found a mark.

The on-shore defenders were utilizing a similar weapon, but for the main part their defense was futile. The mobile ships offered too tiny a target for the inaccurate catapults. Once, indeed, a spark caught one of the nigruous ship's mainsails, and a great sheet of flame rose over the craft. But a swarm of sailors roached high into the rigging to prevent the fire from spreading.

Duke thought, "Oh, boy! What one twenty-incher would do to that crowd! Or even a broken-down howitzer!" But aloud he said, "Quelchal—I don't understand? For a while you had me convinced that your nation was one well-versed in science and mechanics. How is it they use such primitive weapons?"

Quelchal, too, was puzzled. He answered slowly,

"That is something I cannot understand. I did not lie to you, Duke Callion. I think my time-ship proved my contention. All I can assume is that—"

Joey Cox, who had turned the wheel over to Hurkan and come forward to join them, interrupted him suddenly.

"Well, that seems to be that. The battle's over! But w-w-who won?"

Duke and Quelchal looked swiftly. The battle *was* over, and now the massive black fleet was swinging about; preparing to leave the harbor. Duke said, "Hey—they're moving this way!" and leaped toward the wheel. He rapped sharp orders to his shipmates. "Reef the sails! Get down every inch of canvas. We don't want those black babies to see us!"

But his warning came too late. Already the black fleet had put about, and one ship was edging away from the others; scudding across the intervening water in the direction of the lonely little craft.

Duke countermanded his order.

"Never mind—we're in for it now! Get 'em all up again! Maybe we can beat out the big unwieldy bug!"

A big "bug" the approaching black bireme might be—looking, as it did, like a huge, many-legged spider as it crawled over the water towards them, its double row of oars dipping in magnificent unison. But unwieldy it most certainly was not. With the cadenced rhythm of the oarsmen aided by the wind that filled the sails, it literally flew toward their laboring little sloop.

The harbor was still knots distant. There was no hope of succor coming from the shore. It was catch-as-catch-can; the agility of the little boat against the superior lines and speed of the Titanian man-o'-war. Black as a thundercloud; ominous as impending doom, the vessel plunged down on the small

sloop. The Titanian raiders, their bombardment of Aztlan having ended in a bootless draw, seemed determined to at least wreak their vengeance on this tiny Atlantean craft.

Nearer and nearer they drew. Now Duke and his companions could see the horde of faces glaring down upon them from the soldiers' deck; could glimpse, through tiny port holes, the straining visages of the slaves in the galley rack. The long oars seemed to yawn toward them . . . recede . . . yawn toward them again.

EVEN at that, they might have made it -had not Hurkan's treachery betrayed them. So intent was Duke at the wheel, curveting, twisting, writhing his tiny craft through the green like a live thing, that he did not have time to watch the venomous ex-priest. Nor did the others; their first intimation of anything wrong coming when,

"The scoundrel!" roared Quelchal. "He has destroyed us all!"

And suddenly, beneath Duke's tensed hands, the boat seemed to go dull and lifeless. He looked up, an oath springing to his lips.

Hurkan had seized the moment. Scrambling to the fore deck, he had slashed expertly at the ropes which held the straining sails; had taken time to slash once . . . twice . . . thrice . . . at the sails themselves before leaping over the gunwale.

Now the boat, like a bird with two broken wings, shredded sails flapping aimlessly in the wind, came slowly to heel, stopped, and began to wallow in the forewash of the approaching Titanian vessel.

"At l-l-least," screamed Joey Cox madly, "I'll get h-h-*him* for this!" In a swift movement he was at the side of the boat. Then he, too, was in the water. His splashing body bore down upon that of the frantically struggling Hurkan.

Duke Callion took Pyrrha in his arms. For all too short an instant he pressed her close; then released her. To Quelchal he said, "We'll let 'em know they were in a fight, anyway—"

From the water rose a frightened scream. Little Joey Cox had overhauled the traitorous priest. His hands were seeking, finding, Hurkan's throat. . . .

There came a sudden, grinding shock. Wood struck wood; splintering. A shard of broken oar shattered the flopping jib of the tinier craft. Duke saw the butt of a crushed blade throb suddenly backward against one of the galley slaves' faces; saw wood and flesh and blood grind horribly together once while a piercing shriek broke from the oarsman's gushing throat.

He was conscious of Pyrrha at his shoulder, her scented hair fragrant in his nostrils. Of a wild-eyed Quelchal charging to meet a horde of gigantic invaders who dropped from the towering decks above to swarm their own small boat. He glimpsed, for an instant, a heavy figure hurtling down toward him; black bulk blotting the sun. . . .

Then something silver gleamed, and lightning was crashing madly at the base of his skull. He felt strength sloughing away from him; his knees buckling forward. He saw a host of bestial faces writhe in taunting laughter; heard the voice of Pyrrha crying hopelessly, "Duke—"

Then all was silence.

CHAPTER XIII

The Dungeons of Titania

THERE was dampness about him; a moist and fetid chill that seemed to ooze into the marrow of his bones. The air his parched lungs gulped was rank

and sour; smelling of old sores long afester. Duke gagged, raised up on one elbow, and peered about him.

Instantly someone was at his side. Pyrrha. Her face, against his, was wet with tears.

"Duke! You're all right?"

"It t-t-takes more than a crack on the c-c-conk," said the voice of Joey Cox, "to kill Duke Callion. Hey, fella! How's the head feel?"

"Lousy, thanks!" groaned Duke. He rose to his feet gingerly; peered into the semi-darkness about him. "Where are we, anyway?"

"In the dungeons below the castle-fort of Titania," answered Quelchal. "You have been unconscious for a longer time than you imagine, Duke Callion."

"It looks like it," agreed Duke. "How long?"

"Several hours. It is not far from Titania to my country. But—" Quelchal appended ruefully, "far enough!"

Duke saw, now, that he and his companions were in but one corner of a spacious, vaulted dungeon. The place was like a gigantic, filthy honeycomb. And it was peopled with others, captive like themselves.

Seemingly no concerted effort had been made by the Titans to keep their captives under bonds. Here and there Duke saw a prisoner chained to the wall, but for the most part the dungeon's inhabitants roamed freely within the limitations of the moldy cavern. Ruddy spots in the darkness glowed where they had built small fires to ward off the miasmic chill. About each of these fires was gathered an evil-looking group of humans.

Duke said shortly, "Come on—let's see what kind of dump this is!" and led the way to the nearest fire. As he and his friends pushed into the squalid little circle, unfriendly faces turned toward them. One pock-marked captive snarled an oath at Duke; grabbed him by the arm and spun him around.

"Fair warning, brother," he spat, "before I slit your throat like a herring. This is *my* fire and *my* band! Go build your own blaze if ye'd be warm!"

Duke said thoughtfully, "So that's the way it is, eh?" and stared at the hostile circle of faces. "Every band has its own captain? And its own fire?" He faced the pock-marked one coolly. "And suppose I declare myself in on this band? Then what?"

"Then—*this!*" retorted the band captain. A grimy hand flew to his belt. Metal shimmered evilly. He rushed at Duke, the naked blade heart-high.

Pyrrha screamed. The scream turned heads from all parts of the room. A tall, black-haired youngster stepped forward swiftly; stayed his captain's hand.

"Let be!" he begged. "The captive is new here—"

With a foul curse the band leader jerked free and flung himself once more upon Duke. Joey chuckled. He said, under his breath, "What did I tell you? Wherever he goes there's trouble!" He didn't even stir. He knew Duke too well to waste movements.

Duke's left hand darted out as the captain sprung in. He grasped the pock-marked one's wrist in an iron clutch; wrenched sharply. Bone grated dully. The knife clattered to the stones. The man fell back, screaming vituperative threats, nursing his shattered wrist in his good hand.

Duke said speculatively, "Now, if any of the rest of you—"

The dark-haired youngster who had attempted to befriend him stepped forward smiling.

"There are no others," he said. "I will vouch for the rest. I am Dwyfan of Cym."

"And I—" began Duke. A sharp,

warning cry turned him in time. The injured captain, maddened with anger and pain, had raised himself to one knee; crawled behind Duke. Even now he was lifting the blade to plunge it into the small of Duke's back.

Duke moved fast, but Dwyfan was even faster. In one swift stride he was over the murder-bent leader; had turned the blade in his hand. He made a jabbing motion. The pock-marked one's scream died in a gurgle. Just once he twitched—then lay still.

Casually, Dwyfan lifted the body. "Thus we dispose of them," he said, "in this hell-hole!" He carried the dead body to a stream of evil-smelling water that entered the prison through a tube, splashed into a wide, deep trough running the length of the room, and disappeared into another circular aqueduct.

HE heaved mightily. The body arched into the torrent. Then, as

Duke moved fast but Dwyfan was even faster. In one swift stride he was on the murder-bent leader.

the rushing waters plucked at it, it moved sluggishly downstream to disappear into the unknown beyond.

"We must provide our own sanitation," smiled the dark Dwyfan. "Our captors forget us, once we are here. Oh, they throw us scraps of food from time to time, like wild beasts. But were we not needed as galley slaves, no doubt they would begrudge us even their slops."

They had rejoined the group at the fire now, and Duke noted a new respect on the faces of those who had before questioned his presence. Other prisoners, attracted by the commotion, had drifted from their own fires. Duke turned to Dwyfan wonderingly.

"There must be more than three score held captive in these dungeons," he marvelled.

"We were taking census just before you came," the Cymrian replied. "Three score and four, including yourselves. And—minus one, now—that makes sixty-three."

Duke's eyes narrowed.

"Sixty three," he mused, "and two-thirds of them are sturdy fighting men. Tell me, have you never contemplated escape from your prison?"

A listener laughed hoarsely. Another said, "Escape? Traghol has just shown you the only escape!" Duke regarded the man thoughtfully.

"Traghol?"

Dwyfan the Cym shrugged and nodded toward the stream. "Folddhe means that the only escape is—death! We are on an island. An island of giants. Come, see for yourself!"

There was a small, barred window set high in the wall of the dungeon. Yellow rays of late afternoon sun filtered dustily through the narrow slit. Dwyfan gestured Duke to follow; began to clamber up the damp, uneven rock wall, clinging with fingertips and toes.

Dwyfan panted, "You are a man, stranger. Few can manage this climb," and motioned Duke to the window.

Duke saw, then, why there was no escape from the dungeon. Titania was an island, and to escape the prison was useless. The Titan soldiers guarding their rock-walled little empire would hunt down like a dog any stranger who succeeded in escaping the cells. But yet—

Duke gazed wistfully at the scene before him. The calm, green, unchanging sea; smooth and serene as ever. The horizon paling into the azure sky. And he sighed.

Dwyfan laughed mirthlessly, and began to clamber down again.

"You see? Escape is both impossible and—futile!"

Duke nodded. "Impossible and futile. Yes." And for an instant a great dread swept over him. Time sped by, while they, the only ones who could save Atlantis from its impending fate, languished in this dungeon. His jaw tightened. "Yes—but it must be accomplished!"

THERE came the sound of a key grating in a rusty lock. The two men who had just reached the floor spun to see an armed group of their captors entering the dungeon doorway.

For the first time, Duke was able to see the men who warred upon Atlantis—and his eyes grew wide at the sight of them. Titans! They were Titans, indeed. Not a man of them was less than seven feet in height; and each was built in perfect proportion. Huge, broad men; raven-haired and dark of visage. Strong-thewed and mighty. And with them—

Joey gasped, and lunged forward.

"H-h-hurkan!" he cried.

The crimson-robed ex-priest of Mayapan edged cagily behind one of his

stalwart companions. His smile was nervous but determined. He sneered, "So we meet again, my friends?"

Joey raged, "You grinning s-s-scoundrel! I thought I'd drowned you like the rat you are!"

"Hurkan lives to avenge his wrongs!" spat the man. He nodded to the tall captain beside him. "That one. The girl."

Duke gritted, "Oh, no you don't!" and raced to the side of Pyrrha. Joey and Quelchal, and their new friend, Dwyfan, also closed in to form a protective circle about her. But the unarmed guard was impotent before the strength and size of the Titan soldiery. With vast unconcern, the Titans broke them apart with cold steel; seized the girl and bore her to Hurkan.

"Pyrrha!" Duke quivered with rage, feeling steel press threateningly against his breast. She was fighting like a wildcat; clawing and scratching at her captors. But now she saw his own plight and subsided. Harkan smiled.

"Ah, that is better! Will you come quietly—or shall I have my friends quarter your groom for the crows?"

Pyrrha's frenzy melted. She cried in an agonized voice, "Duke! Resist them no longer. I—I will be all right!"

Quelchal b o o m e d devastatingly, "This will not be forgotten, Hurkan! Traitor and thief! With my own hands, I will rip your heart from your breast and feed it to the dogs that begat you!"

"Your bones will rot in this dungeon, braggart!" jeered Hurkan. To Duke he added, "Farewell, man out of the future! Despair not for your bride. When the conquest of Aztlan is concluded, and you rot here with your fellows, she will be safe and secure—lying in my arms!"

Then a word to the Titan captain—and they were gone. Once more the key grated in the massive lock. Dull silence fell over the dungeon. Dull silence which at last was broken by the voice of the Cym, Dwyfan, springing to his feet to address the brooding prisoners.

"Now," he cried in a voice of thunder, "we are become no longer men! It was evil enough that we allowed ourselves to be meekly herded into this stinking pest-hole, to rot here like caged rodents. But we have stood by and seen them take a *woman*—a young and beautiful woman! And a bride! Shall we stand for this any longer?"

A MUTTERING rose from the forward-pressing horde. It rose and grew to an ominous rumble of sound; an ominous growl of manhood long taunted, but finally spurred to rage. The sound of steel mingled with the rumble of voices. Angry shouts roused unholy echoes in the murky cavern. One man burst forward to confront Duke.

"The time is past for tiny bands and petty band-captains!" he cried. "I, Angha of Boeotia, do hereby bow to a mightier leader than myself. Duke Callion, my sword and heart are yours. And those of my followers!"

It was the trap that released the tempest. Fire swept through the other prisoners. One by one, from the most virile captain to the humblest serf, they surged forward to dedicate themselves to the single purpose. A motley crew they were; many of them gaunt and ragged. Their names were a rollcall of the nations of earth. Like Babel their voices sounded.

"I, Ogyges of Attica . . . Yima of Iran . . . Valthgar of the Sunless Land . . ."

Something of their fire ignited the dulling flame in Duke Callion's own heart. He stared at his new rag-tag army with sudden hope. His warrior's eyes appraised, and found good, these

men. Valthgar, the huge, blond man from the North. Ogyges, the broad-chested Attican. Chiba, the great black-skinned barbarian from Afric. His eyes blazed.

"It is good! I accept your vows. Pick up your blades and weapons, and you leaders gather about me while we plan a council of war."

CHAPTER XIV

The Ancient Legion

HIS words were interrupted by the sound of a commotion outside the walls of the dungeon. Something metallic shattered against the stone abutments. A weird streak of glowing orange flared briefly in the tiny, slitted window; hiss and spluttered, and disappeared.

Dwyfan the Cym left the group; once more clambered up the wall to the window. From that height he looked down at the allies; cried excitedly,

"It's a counter-attack! The Atlanteans' fleet is in the harbor, bombarding the city!"

Quelchal smiled grimly.

"I knew retaliation would be swift!" he grunted.

Joey Cox said, "To h-h-hell with that! This is just what the d-d-doctor ordered for us! Duke—those Atlantean ships offer us a way of getting off the island!"

Only one of the assembled captains remained stubborn. It was Folddhe, the grim, dour-visaged Celt, who repeated the morbid warning he had made before. "There is only one escape from these dungeons! Death—and the tube!"

Dwyfan said scornfully, "You cowardly cur—"

But Duke Callion halted them suddenly as, their eyes blazing, the two men wheeled to face one another.

"Stay! Folddhe speaks more truth than he knows! There *is* a way from the dungeons!"

Valthgar, the Viking, said, "A way?"

"The tube! The water tunnel! Has anyone ever attempted escape through there?"

The swarthy Iranian, Yima, shook his head morbidly. "It was told me once that a madman tried it. He was never heard of again."

And Joey pleaded, "No, Duke! You can't try that! We'll storm the door . . . break through the walls somewhere!"

Duke said, "Before this battle is ended? No, we must move now—and swiftly! Before the Atlantean fleet leaves the harbor. They are our one hope of salvation!"

Swiftly he stripped himself of all heavy impedimenta. His high field boots. His now useless gun belt and holster. The machete he had worn since the fight—oh, so long ago—in Chunhubub. Into his belt he tucked only a slim dirk. Then he strode to the side of the trough which fed the dungeon with water.

The exit tube was barely wide enough to contain a man's body. Duke looked at it—and for an instant fear and indecision weakened him. Then he remembered Pyrrha in Hurkan's lustful arms. He took a deep breath; turned once to grasp Joey's hand.

"Gather at the door. If I succeed, I'll find some way to open it. If not—"

Joey understood. He said, "Okay, D-d-duke! Good luck!"

Then he turned away, reluctant to watch, as Duke drew a deep, lung-filling breath and plunged himself into the racing current; straight through the mouth of the tunnel tube.

HIS lungs were shrivelled with fire, and the desire to breathe was a

force that sapped strength from his failing arms and legs. The water pressed about him coldly; sweeping him out of darkness into darkness he knew not where. The sound of his beating heart throbbed in his ears like a threnody of death.

Duke Callion knew that it was a matter of seconds before his tortured lungs would have their will over his weakening body. Soon that insistent inner urge would open his clenched mouth and nostrils; let in a flood of slimy, stinking water.

His eyes, open despite the filthy scum that surrounded him, saw nothing but darkness. He fought his way to the surface, the top of the tube, hoping for an inch of fetid air above the water. There was none. The tube was completely choked with the offal drainage of the dungeons.

This, then, Duke knew, was the end. And even as he struggled to hold that stifling bit of air in him, he found himself thinking of Pyrrha . . .

Then, suddenly, the darkness about him was turned to a dull, misty gray. Sunlight! There was sunlight on the water somewhere! And where there was sunlight, there was air!

His body met, locked against, something monstrously distorted. Something fleshy, flabby, that gave before him like soft, unbaked dough. In the murky light Duke saw what blocked his passage. The body of the slain captain, Traghol, somehow caught at the lip of the tube where it opened to the Outside —and freedom!

The irony of it almost forced a groan from Duke's lips. That he should be this near release, only to be defeated in death by one who had failed to master him alive. With a last, convulsive movement of despair, he lashed out with both fists against the swollen carcass.

And—it gave! Sluggishly at first, then as the cumulative force of the water behind gave it impetus, with explosive speed! Water pressure thrust inexorably against Duke's back. He felt himself popped like a cork out of a bottle . . . sprawling helplessly through air . . . falling . . .

But even while falling, he found time to draw into his lungs fresh, lifegiving air before he plunged once more into water. But, miraculously, this was *clean* water! Its grateful sting laved his eyes, cleansing them of their offal-burned smarting. Its bosom lifted him. He was atop the water, and

It was sea-water! Clean, salt sea-water! The tube which fed the dungeons opened onto a sheer thirty foot drop into the ocean.

Again and again, Duke ducked himself, scrubbed at his hair and face and eyes with the emerald salt water to rid himself of the last vestiges of the filth through which he had swum. Finally, clean again, he circled back toward the shore, selecting the most likely vantage point from which to re-enter the fortress.

He found it. A narrow foothold staircase circling up the rampart walls; entering the fort through an arched doorway. On catlike feet, he stole up this walk; apprehensive that at any moment he might be seen from below.

But he was not. The Titans were too busy staving off the retaliatory attack of the ships from Aztlan.

Duke's sense of direction, earned through years of vagabondage, served him well. In the musty corridors of the castle, he chose unerringly the proper turns. And at last he gained a low-ceilinged avenue which he knew *had* to open on the dungeon's only doorway.

HE rounded a final corner—and knew at once that he had guessed right. For there were two soldiers

standing beside a barred door. There was disturbed anxiety on their faces as they listened to the tumult of sound echoing through the grillwork.

As Duke waited, one guard said nervously, "I don't like it, Bursal! I don't like it at all. There's something strange afoot amongst the prisoners."

Bursal laughed carelessly, "Let be! Who cares if the rabble howls? Stone and iron will hold them!"

"I think we should call the captain of the guard. Perhaps a few lashes would quiet them?"

Bursal stroked his chin meditatively. "Well—a few lashes wouldn't hurt. I like to see them writhe, anyway. Wait you here, Herg. I'll call the captain."

Duke shrank into the shadows as the guard's footsteps approached. Now they were almost upon him. Harness clanking, he turned the corner—

He never had a chance. Duke's dirk was lunging at his throat even as the man's eyes widened in surprise and horror. His cry was stifled in a choking gurgle. His blood gushed a hot torrent over Duke's bared arm as the man sank lifeless to the ground.

From the far end of the corridor, the other man, Herg, cried nervously, "Bursal! Bursal! Did you call?" Then his footsteps came racing up the avenue. He almost stumbled over the body of the prostrate Bursal; recovered his footing just in time to see death, grim-faced and terrible, bearing down upon him. He reached for his sword . . . his hand never found it. Duke's dirk found his heart first.

Eagerly, Duke snatched the key-ring from the harness of the second warrior. In a trice he was at the door of the dungeon; twisting the rusted clef in the lock. A hoarse shout greeted him as the door swung open. Joey Cox was pounding his back; screaming delightedly:

"You did it! I knew y-y-you could, Duke!" Then the captains, the first taste of victory sweet on their lips, were gathering about him, asking instructions. Duke said swiftly,

"The girl. Pyrrha. We must find her first, then steal a longboat. Row to the Atlantean fleet and safety!"

It was Duke who led the vengeance-hungry horde of prisoners forward and upward into the heart of the castle. Some sort of prescience seemed to guide him. It was as if the thoughts of Pyrrha were blazing a trail for him. But whatever the explanation, the ragged army found its way to the proper sector without once meeting opposition.

At the entrance to an ornate hall, Duke motioned his men to halt. Swiftly he ordered,

"We split here! Joey, half of the men go with you in that direction. If you do not find Pyrrha, continue on to the shore and find there a boat or boats.

"We others will go forward. May we all meet at the shore!"

"Or in Valhalla!"* added Valthgar. "So be it!"

The two groups split. Duke appraised those behind him swiftly. Joey's detachment had taken Quelchal, Ogyges, Yima and Angha and their followers. He had drawn the giant Nubian, Chiba, Valthgar the Viking, Dwyfan, and the morose Celt, Folddhe.

WITH whatever weapons they possessed—knives and clubs for the most part; an occasional rusted sword—the strange crew pressed forward over stone flaggings, past an ornate court, into the heart of the fortress. Finally, at the portal of a great bronze-studded door, dim voices came to them. Again Duke hushed them into wary silence.

Then his heart gave a great leap as he heard, on the other side of the door, a well-remembered voice. The voice of

the rascally priest, Hurkan.

"The rulership of Aztlan," Hurkan was saying, "is all I ask for my services. That and one other thing. The girl, Pyrrha."

A rumbling, disdainful voice asked, "You seek to bargain with me, renegade?"

"There are many things I can tell you about the island of Aztlan," Hurkan persisted insinuatingly. "You did not know for instance that the fires beneath—"

Chiba, the strong-thewed b l a c k, snicked his dirk in its scabbard and rumbled deep in his throat. But Duke laid a restraining hand on his arm.

"Wait!" he whispered. "The girl first! I have a plan to take care of the Titans. But we must get to Aztlan first."

Grumbling, the Nubian subsided. Duke's intuition was working with sweet perfection now. It was with a feel of utter certainty that he led his men to an adjacent doorway. With complete assurance that he flung open the door.

"Here!" he cried.

And he was right. As his detachment crowded into the room behind him, two women started and cried out with fright. One was an auburn haired girl with flesh the hue of alabaster. The other was—Pyrrha. Just for a moment did surprise shock Pyrrha into motionlessness. Then, with a glad cry, she was racing forward.

But there was another in the room. One of the giant Titans, an armed guard, standing beside a huge brass gong. One startled look at the raiders and he swung into action. He reached for the hammer; raised it to bring it across the gong's gleaming face. . . .

Cro-o-o-onggh! The crashing sound filled the room with an ear-splitting din. Dwyfan roared, "He'll bring the whole fortress down on us!" and leaped at the guard, sword gleaming. With both hands he swung the heavy blade. The man's head wobbled loosely on a riven neck; fell forward on his chest. He fell slowly, ponderously, as a tall building might fall. In sections.

Duke shouted, "Get the other girl, Dwyfan. Let's get out of here!"

Pyrrha was at his side; sobbing with joy and relief. He saw the dark-haired, laughing Dwyfan sweep the auburn-tressed beauty off her feet, tuck her under his arm like a sack of meal, and charge toward the doorway. Then all of them were racing down the corridor toward an entrance-way suddenly filling with Titans.

Afterward, Duke Callion had no clear recollection of that fight. It was like some wild, fantastic dream in which a warrior goes down, bleeding from a thousand wounds, only to rise again and struggle on a few feet farther.

He, himself, was like a madman as he carved a way through the mountain of flesh that stood before him. He caught fitful glimpses of his fellows about him. He heard Chiba's barbaric war-chant rising above the din of battle; saw the swart Ogyges rip a dripping sword from a Titanic opponent with his bare hands, and plunge the weapon down the man's gaping throat.

Dark Yima was a maddened dervish. Like a cat, he fought to disembowel his antagonists. A sadistic smile on his slender features he fought his way through the holocaust with a lunge, twist, rip—and on to the next man!

But from their superior height, the Titans wrecked havoc amongst the raiders, too. Twice Duke Callion felt a companion at his side gasp, choke, and slip to the floor. Once one of the prisoners stepped squarely into the blade of

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* Heaven where heroes dwell.

a sword lunging at Duke's heart. There was a smile on the man's lips as he died . . . and salt stung Duke Callion's eyes as, vengefully, he cleft the skull of the Titan who had slain him from pate to chin.

AND then, somehow, they were no longer inside the fortress. They were in the open, racing down across a sandy beach to where a wildly gesticulating Joey beckoned them on.

Pyrrha stumbled, and Duke lifted her bodily from the ground; swung her over his shoulder. No time to waste now in gentleness. Already a fresh horde of Titans were racing through the portals of the fort, charging down the beach after them.

And there were so few of them left! Even in this moment of haste, it sickened Duke's heart to see that of the score of men who had been in his *cortége*, a scant half dozen remained alive. . . .

Then they were at the boats, and Joey's voice was screaming in his ear, "G-g-get in, Duke! We're c-c-casting off! He felt friendly hands relieving him of his precious burden; water splashing about his ankles, his calves, his thighs. A hard deck was under him. Over him a black sail was blossoming like an ebon flower before the wind.

And the angry roar of Quelchal, roaring above the din, "The harbor chain! By Bel, we're lost!"

Duke's heart sank. He had forgotten that this, as all ancient harbors, was secured against invasion by a great, metal chain stretched across the mouth of the harbor inlet. A massive series of links deep-set into oak stanchions on either crescent of land. Through this the ships could not pass!

It was then occurred that which Duke Callion was never afterward to forget. For as the rebels stood dumb-struck on the decks of their bobbing craft, feeling hope die coldly within them, numbed by this culminating blow to their plans, one figure stirred into action. It was the dour Celt, Folddhe.

With a snarled oath, he wrenched the heavy blade from Duke's hand. Then, before anyone could guess his intention, he was overside, sword in his teeth, swinging toward the nearer arm of land.

Too late the stupefied Titans divined his aim. By the time their bewildered captain had given orders to intercept him, he was already dragging himself out on the far beach; racing to the sturdy stanchion into which was imbedded the harbor chain.

The blade in his hand hacked at the stubborn wood like the avenging wrath of a god. Slivers of wood broke off; the gigantic stapling pin loosened. Duke watched him breathlessly. A few more strokes, now. Another. Another!

Then the Titans were upon him. A cast spear tore a gaping wound in his side; blood gushed forth to paint a gory cicatrix down one deep-planted limb. Another stroke. And another. Wood groaned. Metal grated. And—

A great shout rose from the boats. The massive harbor chain broke from its mooring; sank beneath the choppy rip. The straining boats broke free. Sails caught the wind and they spurted forward like racers.

Folddhe threw his broken sword into the faces of the raging Titans. Then once more he was splashing, stumbling, swimming through the sea. Duke heeled his vessel to. A host of eager hands reached out as the heroic Celt threw a dripping arm over the gunwale.

Dwyfan the Cym cried, "Folddhe, you have saved us all! Come aboard. We are free now!"

But Folddhe shook his head. His lips were white with pain. Now Duke saw, with sudden horror, that where one

limb dragged in the water, the emerald sea was stained a dull and dirty crimson. And Folddhe gasped,

"Think you still . . . I am a . . . cowardly cur . . . Dwyfan . . . ?"

He smiled that tight, dour smile they all knew so well. Then his pale arm slipped from the gunwale –and he was gone.

Duke's eyes were moist as he turned away. Dwyfan the Cym was weeping openly in great, wracking sobs, like a little child. Duke pressed his shoulders consolingly.

"We will avenge him, Dwyfan," he promised simply. "But later. For, see? Already the ships of Aztlan are putting about to receive us!"

CHAPTER XV

"Atlantis Is—Doomed!"

NATA, youthful captain of the Atlantean man-o-war *Kyklopes,* which had picked up the fugitives, nodded gently as Quelchal finished speaking.

"I do not pretend to understand all you say," he confessed. "But, then, I am merely a humble, god-fearing sailor. It is not for me to question your wisdom. Within the space of hours we will be in Aztlan, where you can communicate your warning to the Emperor, Zeus."

Quelchal said somberly, "Much time has been lost. Much precious time. Already the hour of the Deluge draws near."

Duke said cheerfully, "Well, it looks as if our troubles are all over now, Quelchal." And he pressed his wife's hand affectionately.

Joey Cox rose, disgust plain on his features.

"S-s-soft stuff!" he snorted disdainfully. "I'm g-g-going out and talk to Dwyfan. You people in love—"

He stopped suddenly as the door burst inward to admit the dark-haired Cym. Behind him, blushing furiously, and trying to draw back, was the auburn beauty who had been Pyrrha's maid-servant in the castle of Titania.

"How long, Nata," demanded Dwyfan, "before this barge reaches Aztlan?"

"Very soon now," answered the captain. "Why?"

Dwyfan laughed uproariously, displaying gleaming white teeth. "Then very soon," he echoed, "this luscious morsel will become Dwyfach -wife of Dwyfan!"

Joey's face was a picture of dismay. He gasped for breath. Then,

"Well, I'll be d-d-damned!" he complained mournfully. "They're all g-g-going crazy! I wish I was back in Cin –" He stopped and reconsidered. "No—I don't! But I w-w-wish I was back in Mayapan!"

DUKE CALLION had travelled over much of the face of the Twentieth Century world, and had considered its culture to be a very high and worthy one. But now, after a journey about the capital city of the island of Aztlan, with Nata as guide, he was forced to concede that this ancient civilization compared favorably with the best he had known before.

Quelchal had gone to a private audience with the Emperor and his advisors. Joey, fatigued by their recent adventures, had remained in the apartment allotted to them vowing that he was going to, "H-h-hit the hay for a week or t-t-ten days!"

Nata had proven a sterling host. He had shown to them the palace with its gorgeous triple wall; the outer of brass, the second of tin, the third of the lost element—oralchium. He had shown

them the temple to King Poseidon, one of Aztlan's early rulers; its interior a treasure-house of gold, silver and ivory; the gigantic statue of the King himself standing in a chariot—charioteer of six winged horses—of such a size that Poseidon's carven head touched the roof of the temple.*

He had shown them the fountains and the hot baths for which Aztlan was noted. ("Volcanic substratum," Duke Callion guessed.) Then the gardens, the canals, and the thousands upon thousands of homes, shops and amusement centers which made up the capital city.

Duke looked—and marvelled.

"But, Nata," he said at last, "This city is tremendous! What is its population?"

"More than an *alau* *," replied the mariner proudly. "Twenty and one *kinchil* at the last census. In the city of Aztlan alone there are thirty *cabal*."

Duke whistled, translating the Atlantean figures into the more familiar Arabic numbers. "Larger than Chicago in my day. And from the looks of things, more active as well!" Then recollection of a former puzzling question came to him. "There's one thing Quelchal was not able to explain to me, Nata.

"It was my understanding that in Quelchal's day the scientific progress of your countrymen was high. Yet today we have seen no evidence of great mechanical skill. No telephones, automobiles, electricity . . . nothing, to be brief, which would explain why Quelchal, your predecessor by some four hundreds of years, should have been able to construct the space-time craft in which we came here."

"As I have told you, Duke Callion, I am a humble sailing man. It is not mine to question the wisdom of my rulers. But—there is a legend amongst us that Aztlan once possessed these things of which you speak. And discarded them."

"Discarded them?"

"Yes. Quelchal lived in an era—" Nata grinned sheepishly, and Duke knew that the sea captain was, like himself, conscious of the constant incongruity of speaking of Quelchal as having lived *before*, when the man was alive *now*. "Quelchal lived in an era which boasted a mighty scientific knowledge. But as must be the case in a land densely populated, there came a time when civilization had reached the state where all mankind's normal work was being performed mechanically.

"Shortly after the death of King Theseus, it was decided that our race was retrogressing rather than *pro*gressing. The wise King Heracles decreed that the artificial age of machinery must end. That land culture and manufacture must return to the men themselves.

"So it was ordained. And lest some future civilization be tempted by the fruits of earlier knowledge, it was ordered that a great pyre be built. The savants conducted a ruthless destruction of all mechanical apparatus, all books treating of such subjects, all notes and facts and figures.

"Only vital discoveries were retained and utilized. The mariner's compass, the knowledge of crop rotation, navigation principles, astronomical calculations."

NATA smiled wistfully. "Yes, there is even told that at one time Azt-

* For a complete description of Aztlan, see Plato's *Critias*.

* Mayan numbers	Arabic Equivalents
hun	1
20 hun—1 kal	20
20 kal—1 bak	400
20 bak—1 pic	8,000
20 pic—1 cabal	160,000
20 cabal—1 kinchil	3,200,000
20 kinchil—1 alau	64,000,000
20 alau—1 hablat	1,280,000,000

lan knew the secret of flight. Not of terrestrial flight alone, but of flight amongst the stars. To the sister planets revolving about the mother Sun . . ."

"It sounds incredible," murmured Duke, "but somehow I believe it. It explains so many things. The tales of ancient gods who descended from the skies in chariots of living flame—" Then, suddenly, "But there is one bit of knowledge which it was stupid of your people to destroy, Nata. That which would enable Aztlan to conquer its enemy, Titania."

"We did not need such knowledge aforetime," said Nata. "In those days, Aztlan held all the outside world in fee. Now our colonies rebel to loose themselves—" He stared at Duke with sudden hope. "*You* possess this lost knowledge?"

Duke said grimly, "Not all that which your people destroyed. But at least one thing—" Knowing no Atlantean word for it, he had to use the English term. "You have never heard of—gunpowder?"

"Gun . . . powder?" Nata's lips stumbled over the unfamiliar word. "I know its meaning not, Duke Callion."

"Then," Duke smacked a heavy fist into his other palm, "By Bel, you're going to! And so are the Titans! We are going to give those big, overgrown bums something to remember us by!"

IT was in a pitch of high excitement that the trio returned to their apartment. The idea of avenging himself upon the Titans by means of some snappy Twentieth Century ordnance was one much to Duke's liking. Already his hands itched for the feel of a .75 lanyard; his nostrils strained for the sharp, familiar stench of gunpowder. He felt sure that he and Joey, working together, could contrive to give such armament to Aztlan.

"And if we hurry," he promised himself, "there'll be time to blow Titania off the face of the map before the Deluge pops along and does it for us!"

Joey was so enthusiastic about the plan that he forgot to grumble about being wakened.

"S-s-sure we can do it!" he exulted. "I worked for a couple of y-y-years in the Frankford Arsenal, back in Philadelphia. Just g-g-gimme some paper. I'll figure it out. W-w-where's Quelchal? He ought to be here, too!"

As if in answer to his words, the door opened and Quelchal entered. Duke sprang toward him excitedly,

"Listen, Quelchal, we're on the trail of some fun! We're going to—"

Then he stopped in amazement at the expression on the Atlantean's face. It was not anger that dulled Quelchal's eyes. It was despair. Sheer, stark despair—and discouragement.

"What is it? What's the matter?"

Quelchal turned lack-lustre eyes to him; to each of the others in turn. He said in a gray voice,

"My friends — our mission has failed!"

"F-f-failed! What do you mean?"

"I mean—" Quelchal barked a short, sharp, mirthless laugh. "—that the Emperor did not believe my warning. He was friendly. He was sympathetic. But he heard my story as a child might hear a fable—then advised me in all gentleness to come home and rest. Much hardship and privation, he said, had given my brain to phantasms!"

Duke stared at him, stunned.

"Then that means—"

Quelchal's voice was high and shrill.

"Our efforts have been wasted, Duke Callion. The period of *Chuen* is upon us. The year of Atonatiuh draws rapidly to a close. History is about to repeat itself. A few weeks . . . perhaps

but days . . . and the Deluge will come!

"Atlantis is—*doomed!*"

CHAPTER XVI

The Builders

DUKE said disconsolately, "We might have expected something like this, Quelchal. I told you long ago that I did not believe it lay within the power of mortals to make changes in the recorded Past. The Deluge *was;* hence must it always be."

Quelchal shook himself out of his lethargy. His eyes blazed.

"You are wrong, Duke Callion! It is that we are pawns of chance . . . and every step of the gambit has played against us. Had we returned to *my* time, instead of to this less enlightened age—"

Joey interrupted.

"If t-t-that's the big drawback," he said reasonably, "W-w-why don't we try again? Go b-b-back to your time?"

"What do you mean?"

"Another time-ship. You know how to make one now. And you're in a civilized nation, with skilled workmen and plenty of materials at your disposal. Make a second ship, and this time we'll go back to an era where we'll find an understanding p-p-people!"

Quelchal said, "It might be done. By Dis, it *can* be done! I'll get right to work on it!"

"And in the meantime," said Duke, "I've a little project of my own that I want to carry out." Swiftly he told Quelchal of his plan. The Atlantean's lips approved.

"It is good, Duke Callion. The world will be the better with Titania destroyed. And Hurkan along with them; traitor that he is."

Joey nodded. "That guy's done us a lot of dirt. And I've g-g-got a feeling that he'll do us even more, if w-w-we don't watch out! But how about you, Nata? How do you f-f-feel about all this?"

The young mariner said quietly,

"I am a humble man. I should not doubt the wisdom of my Emperor and his advisors but somehow I do. I believe your tale of a Deluge to come. There is but one thing for me to do. Prepare my finest ship for it, that I and my wife and my children may ride out the storms in safety."

Duke grinned, remembering the old Christian tale of the Deluge. He said, "That's the smartest idea of all, Nata. Maybe we'll lick this thing; maybe not. Somebody has to give the world a new lease on life if we lose. So be sure to take plenty to eat. And maybe, like the old boy I used to hear about in Sunday School, you should take along animals and birds."

He grinned again, but the serious-minded Nata did not smile in return. To Duke's surprise he nodded soberly and said,

"It is a good plan, Duke Callion. I shall start preparing now."

He turned and hurried from the room. Duke gazed at Joey and scratched his head.

"Looks like we've got one believer, anyway. And I know where we'll find some others. Joey, suppose you go out and round up the gang. Dwyfan and Angha and Chiba and the rest. We're going to need their help . . ."

A FORTNIGHT passed; two weeks of hectic occupation for Duke Callion and that loyal little band which followed him. Duke and Joey, pooling their knowledge of Twentieth Century armament, had "rediscovered" gunpowder for Aztlan; and vast was the amazement of the naïve Atlanteans to

find that there was potency in the measured admixturing of such simple commonplaces as saltpeter, charcoal of willow, and sulphur.

Joey found himself confronted with the problem of constructing a cannon that would not only shoot, but shoot without destroying itself and everyone about it. His initial attempts caused consternation amongst the Atlantean soldiery—and, on several occasions, almost decimation of the curious who gathered around his "proving grounds." At last there came the day, however, when trial and error resulted in the creation of a cannon. Ugly, it was, and but crudely rifled—but it worked.

"It's n-n-not much to look at," Joey confessed wryly, "b-b-but it ought to scare the living daylights out of the Titans. And that's s-s-something!"

Duke felt some misgivings about Nata. The quiet, simple sailing man had definitely proven himself a convert to the adventurers' warning of the Deluge to come. Asking leave of absence from his duties, he had bought himself a ship, and to this ship he had moved his wife and children.

Now, whilst crowds of highly amused and sometimes openly jeering Atlanteans gathered about this vessel, he was busily engaged in stocking it as for an ocean voyage. To all queries and gibes he made but one reply,

"Duke Callion has said that the waters will come to cover the earth. And I believe him."

But it was not only Nata who believed the tale. Quelchal, Duke and Joey found their cause espoused openly —and with fists when the occasion arose —by those men who had been their companions in the escape from Titania. The blond Viking, Valthgar. Yima. Ogyges.

As Dwyfan said, "Perhaps, as they say, you are mad, Duke Callion. But if so, we owe our lives to your madness. Your cause is our cause."

And on a high ridge of the mountain Colhuacan a little colony came into being. A colony of those who believed the warning of the "future men." The selection of their site was at once determined by logic and chance.

"When the Deluge comes," Duke said, "if it *does* come, it will be prefaced by a great tidal wave. Craft in the harbor will be immediately destroyed. We should build our vessels of escape on a high peak, where there will be egress in any direction."

Unable to choose between several likely promontories, Joey tossed a coin.

"Heads we stay here," he hazarded. "Tails we go to that other peak over there."

The piece of silver glinted momentarily; fell and rolled. Search as they might, none of them could find it.

"We stay here, anyway," laughed Duke. "We have a capital investment in this territory now."

And Joey said ruefully, "Shucks! Good Atlantean money*—and I go tossing it away!"

BUT these were interludes. For the most part the litle crew was kept constantly busy. While Dwyfan, Yima and the others carried on, atop the mount, the work which Nata was dedicating himself to below, Duke and Joey worked like Trojans on the rearmament of the Atlantean fleet.

Perhaps Quelchal was busiest of all.

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* In 1867, archeologists discovered on the island, Corvo, in the Azores group, an unusual coin marked with the symbol of the Crooked Mountain; with the transverse depicting a great serpent twined about two stark trees.

This coin was, in sheer desperation established as "probably Phoenician," though it did not correspond with the known coinage of that land; more resembling the "coiled serpent" of Central America.—Author

For he was laboring night and day over a second glistening sphere to carry him back to his own era—a time in which he would find ready ears to his warning of disaster to come. This time his sphere was being constructed on majestic scale. When completed, it would be large enough to hold the score of men who had pledged themselves to his cause.

And then—the day of vengeance dawned! At last the rearmament of the Atlantean fleet had been accomplished, and every ship had been supplied with a full complement of cannon. Stores of gunpowder had been prepared, and the ambitious Joey had even devised a crude sort of hand grenade for use against the Titans. And for the first time in more than three hundreds of years, Aztlan was in a position to prove itself queen of the seas; mistress of the world.

It was a gala scene when the huge silver fleet set out from the harbor of Aztlan, Titania bound. Banners flew proudly, bands played, crowds cheered themselves hoarse as one by one the Atlantean ships shook out canvas and swept gracefully out of the harbor.

Duke and Joey stood on the deck of the *Kyklopes*, beside Nata, feeling the enthusiastic mood of the crowd communicate itself to them. Of all their band, only Quelchal was remaining in Aztlan. His work was too pressing to allow even for such a foray as this. But all the others of their hard-bitten crew were aboard the commanding vessel. Last to leave the harbor, it would assume command as soon as they reached the open sea; would lead the attack against Titania.

Pyrrha and Dwyfach remained behind. Even though this trip was a leave-taking, the two brides felt no fear. The result of the expedition, both knew, was foreordained. So they waved gladly, proudly, from the docks as the ship pulled away.

Dwyfan grinned and said, "Seems funny, doesn't it? Marriage, I mean—and settling down to a quiet life? Oh, well. We'll make this last scrap a good one."

Duke nodded; straining for a last glimpse of Pyrrha. And then suddenly Joey clutched his arm. He gasped,

"D-d-duke—am I nuts? Did you s-s-see him?"

"Him? Who?"

"There! The guy in the white. Just disappearing around the corner of—Damn it! He's gone!"

Duke said, "What's the matter, Joey? Somebody in Atlantis who owes you money?"

Joey exploded, "Worse than that. It looked like Hurkan!"

"You're seeing things," laughed Duke. "Hurkan's in Titania. And we're going to see him—*now!*" His jaw set tightly. Its cast did not bode well for Hurkan. . . .

TITANIA did not wait for the Atlantean fleet to bring the battle to them. Its warriors sighted the silver vessels from afar, and broke out the huge black sails of their own ships. Ebon oars crawled from the Titan's harbor to meet the rapidly advancing biremes of Aztlan. And it was a mile from the island that the battle began.

"They'll be expecting," Duke said rapidly, "the same old kind of fight. Catapults of fire-balls. Lances thrown by *jaculins*. Ram's-head contacts and hand-to-hand fighting.

"Let them get near us—within accurate shooting range. And then let 'em have it!"

Joey Cox, crouched over the foremost and largest of the *Kyklopes* cannon, chuckled delightedly, and fingered the lanyard.

"Y-y-you bet! Boy, I haven't had so

much f-f-fun since that scrap in Chunhubub. But—no hand-to-hand fighting, Duke?"

"Why should we? There's no use risking lives if we can mow them down this way."

Joey's face fell.

"I was j-j-just thinking of Hurkan," he murmured dejectedly. "But if you f-f-feel that way about it—"

"I may change my mind," Duke's eyes glinted, "if we see Hurkan."

Then there was time for little more, for the slim black craft of Titania were upon them, diabolically sleek in the late rays of the afternoon sun; crowded to the aft rails with sable-armored warriors thirsting for battle.

Already a ram's-head grappling hook was being put out from the Titanian lead vessel. The rhythmic beat of the oarmaster's gong could be heard across the water. The starboard oars were being shipped so the black ship might be manoeuvered closer.

Duke looked at Joey.

"Ready?" he said.

"R-r-ready!" Joey's body tensed.

"Then—fire!"

There was a burst of smoke, a belching of sudden flame, and thunder rent the air. Screams of wild fear and horror rose from the ill-fated Titanian vessel as one side of its wooden keel smashed inward as though struck by some massive fist. Planks ripped and tore. The cries of the living mingled with the groans of the dying. A violent shudder trembled the ship from prow to rudder. Terrified bodies, bruised and bleeding, fled from the entrails of the ship to toss themselves, armor and all, into the water.

The doomed vessel made a gulping, sucking sound as sea water surged forward into the gaping hole. Men dropped like insects from the decks, the rigging. Chained galley slaves made the air hideous with screams of pain and fear.

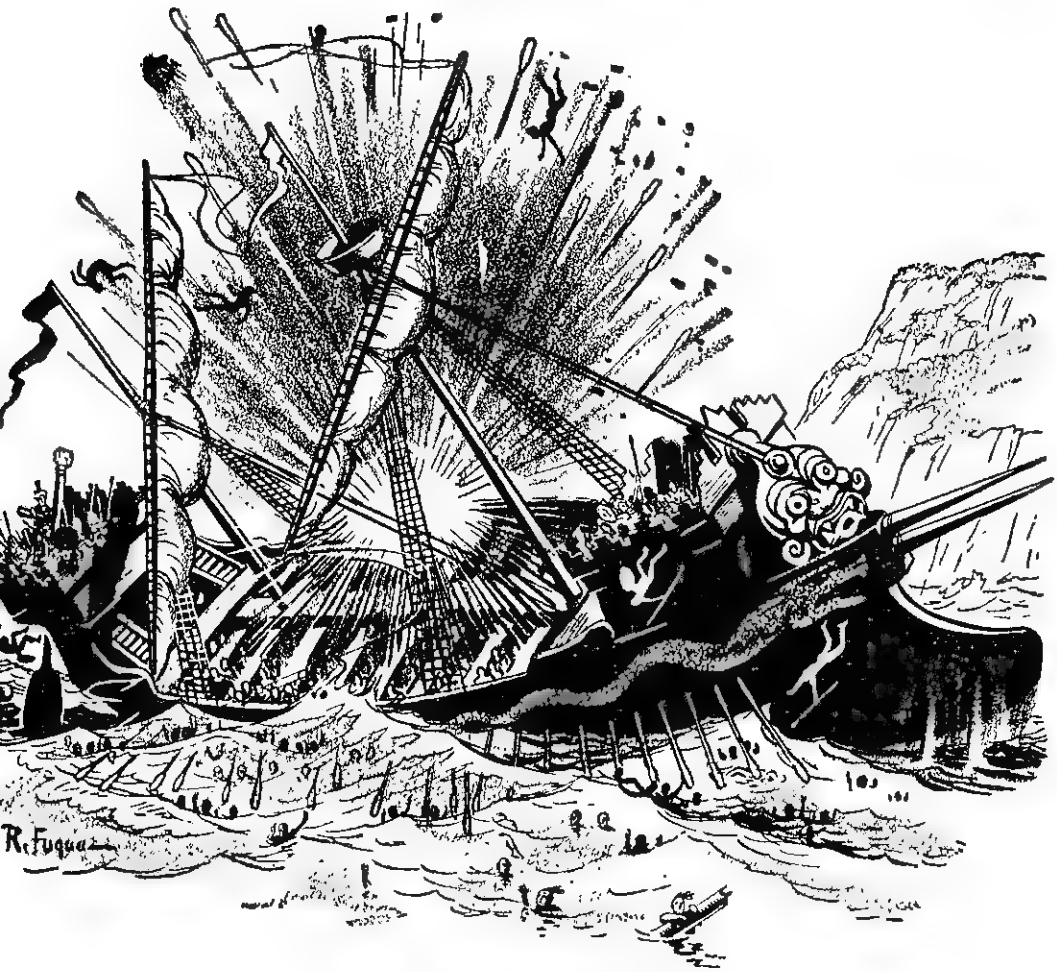
Joey shouted, "A b-b-bull's-eye!" and swivelled about. "G-g-get me near another one!"

But his had been the shot that set off the guns of the other Atlantean vessels. All were firing now, and to the stunned Titans it must have seemed that the thunder and lightning of the gods were bursting forth. Flame and fire struck at their flimsy vessels in a tumult of raging sound; men died unknowing that death was at their sides.

It was not a battle; it was a slaughter.* Within the space of minutes, the sea was clogged with the broken hulls of splintered fighting ships, scud of dragging black sails, shards of masts and spars to which clung clots of gory humanity until their grip loosened and their heavy armor dragged them into the cold, green depths.

Here a captainless vessel, rudder smashed away by an Atlantean ball, spun and struggled like a wounded duck on the surface of the water. There a desperate galley-slave, numb with fear, sought escape by slashing off his own feet to rid them of their shackles; then tottered on bleeding stumps to the railing to throw himself, dying, into the sea. And where scant moments before, a haughty black fleet had come proudly forth to do battle, now the sea was swept clean of all save the silver-ban-

* "The struggle lasted many years, all the might which the Olympians could bring to bear being useless, until on the advice of Gaea (Joey? NSB), Zeus set free the *Kyklopes* and the *Hekatoncheires* (i. e., "brought the ships into play"), of whom the former fashioned thunderbolts for him, while the latter advanced on his side with force equal to the shock of an earthquake. The world trembled down to lowest Tartarus as Zeus now appeared with his terrible weapon and new allies(!). Old Chaos thought his hour had come, as from continuous blaze of thunder-bolts the earth took fire, and the waters seethed in the sea."—"The War of the Titans" from the *Manual of Mythology*, by Murray.



There was a tremendous explosion, and the galley lifted into the air.

nered invaders who dipped from floating spar to spar, rescuing such bits of human flotsam and jetsam as had survived the holocaust.

Even Duke, hardened as he was to the grim reality of warfare, was sickened by the massacre. But he set his jaw grimly.

"On!" he said. "On to Titania!"

BUT Titania had seen, from turrets and walls, the visitation of the gods upon their once mighty fleet. They had no wish to see their city tumbled into ruins; no stomach for the death and destruction they had witnessed from afar.

As the Atlantean fleet swung into the harbor with guns primed and trained, a sobered convoy of weaponless soldiery stepped forward to signal their surrender. Duke gave orders to withhold fire, selected a group of his own followers, and landed.

Through an avenue of weeping women and grave men his triumphal procession ascended the beach to the palace. There he confronted a thoroughly cowed Emperor of Titania.

The Emperor made obeisance; then,

"It is futile to struggle against the

gods," he said. "What is your will of us?"

Dwyfan, at his side, whispered, "Trust him not, my captain! Remember the dungeons!"

But a strange pity stirred Duke Callion for this once glorious, now crushed, nation. He said,

"We seek only your allegiance to Aztlan. That and—"

Joey whispered something swiftly. Duke nodded.

"That," he continued, "and the renegade priest of Mayapan who was your ally. Hurkan."

The Titanian Emperor said quietly, sincerely,

"The allegiance I pledge, master of Thunder and Lightning. But Hurkan —he is not here."

"Not here!" exclaimed Duke, and Joey cried, in a suddenly fearful voice, "I k-k-knew it! That was him I saw on the docks of—"

"He is gone," the Emperor said, "on a mission of his own devising—to Aztlan!"

CHAPTER XVII

The Vengeance of Hurkan

DAWN was breaking over the amaranthine sea, and the first, slender shafts of orange stirred the ocean with slumbrous pastels of beauty. But Duke Callion, restlessly pacing the deck of the *Kyklopes*, had no eye for loveliness just now. He paused to strike a moist hand on the pommel of his sword and plead,

"Step up the beat of your oarsmen, Nata! Haste! There is no time to idle when that devil, Hurkan, devises God knows what hellish schemes against us!"

Nata said soothingly, "Peace, Duke Callion. Our oarsmen weary. But soon we will be in Aztlan again. See? Already the harbor lights glimmer."

Duke stopped grumbling, but his interminable pacing continued. Hours had passed since he learned from the Titanian Emperor the whereabouts of the scoundrelly priest, but each of those hours had seemed a century; each moment decades long.

Nor was the young adventurer the only one to experience this feeling of urgency. That foreboding which comes to active men at a crisis had descended over all of his companions like a sable cloud. Instead of returning home like the conquerors they were, their visages were as strained and drawn as those of defeated men.

But all journeys, howsoever tedious, must come to an end at last. And finally, when the sun had come above the horizon to light the sky with crystal morning, Duke's ship put in to Aztlan harbor.

The crowd that had wished them Godspeed was but a fragment of the mob that turned out to welcome home its victorious heroes. Aztlan had once more come into its own—and its people were joyous. From humblest servant to most noble lord, all were there waiting on the docks. And a messenger brought tidings that the Emperor was waiting in his palace for a special audience with the conquerors.

But for once, Duke Callion was making no palliatory gestures toward a ruler. He said to Nata,

"Give the old boy my apologies. Tell him whatever you want to. *I've* got to find Quelchal!" And he loped off toward the workshop wherein Quelchal was building his new time craft.

QUELCHAL was inclined to discount Duke's fears.

"There is no cause for alarm, Duke Callion," were his first words. "All

Hurkan can possibly hope for is to prejudice the public in your disfavor. It must have been for some such purpose that he came here. But after today—" Quelchal shrugged. "There is no greater man in all Aztlan than you. Were Hurkan to speak a word against you, the mob would tear him limb from limb."

Duke said bluntly, "I don't like it, Quelchal. The man must have an ace up his sleeve. He would not risk his neck stealing into this country merely for the purpose you suggest. There must be something deeper—"

"What, Duke Callion?" Quelchal was smiling. "I fear you have listened to an old-wives' tale."

Duke grumbled, "Well—" and was silent, because he had no answer. "Anyway, I'm going to get my men together. Search for him. And *this* time he won't escape me!"

"It might have been better," agreed Quelchal, "if you had let me have my way with him weeks ago. Still, I approve of your aim. Now, the time ship—"

"It's finished?"

"Not quite, but almost. This time there will be no mistakes. We will return to my era, and therein have a period of time sufficient to convince my people of the impending Deluge."

Quelchal sighed.

"You found it hard to understand, Duke Callion. Sometimes I find it hard myself. Look you! We have failed to convince these people of this era. Thus, when the waters come, disaster will strike them. And we know that on at least one other occasion in Time, those same waters drowned Aztlan.

"Yet there remains the paradoxical truth that as soon as I have completed this machine, we can return to Aztlan of four hundred years ago and *prevent* the Deluge! Is not that a strangely miraculous thing?"

"I've told you before," said Duke gloomily, "that I don't believe it's possible. This time your machine won't work, Quelchal. Or something will go wrong. Man cannot change the tapestry of Time."

"Nothing can go wrong now, Duke Callion," Quelchal contradicted him serenely. "One more day and it is done. The tapestry of Time will have to be rewoven. Are you ready for the next adventure?"

"Whenever you are," nodded Duke. "Or, that is, as soon as I've taken care of Hurkan in *this* era—"

He found his private "army," no longer a rag-tag collection of strangers, but now a well-clad, well-feted group of men, in the banquet hall provided by the Emperor for the heralding of the victors. Despite his anxiety, he could not help but grin at their discomfiture. They were frankly bewildered by all the fuss being made over them, and just as frankly bored. When he had gestured them to meet him outside, man by man they gave vent to an expression of relief.

"Another hour of that speech-making," confessed the swart Ogyges, "And I'd have gone back to Titania."

Valthgar the Viking scrubbed at his right cheek with an embarrassed, hairy paw.

"Lip rouge!" he rumbled. "By the teeth of the Dragon—me with lip rouge on my cheek! These brazen modern women—Bah!"

Duke said, "Well, cheer up! I've got an assignment for you. Listen—" And he told them of Hurkan's being free somewhere on the island; warned them of what the priest's machinations might mean. "Find him!" he concluded, "And when you find him—bring him to me. I would prefer to meet him alive. But—bring him however you must!"

BUT it was Duke Callion himself who found Hurkan. And the way of their meeting was strange.

It was late afternoon. For some hours, Duke had been out searching for the ex-priest. Now, his own seeking fruitless, he returned to Quelchal's workshop in the hope that one of his companions might have returned with news.

Quelchal was inside the huge, shining oralchium sphere working when Duke entered the room. Duke had time to notice that the intricate wiring job was near completion before Quelchal poked his head out to see whom his visitor might be. His lean, bronzed face mirrored astonishment at seeing Duke.

"Duke Callion? But I understood you were at the water-front?"

"The water-front?" Duke shook his head. "You're thinking of two other fellows, Quelchal. I've been up in the hills most of the day. Looking for that scoundrelly rascal, Hurkan."

"But I thought—" Quelchal stared at him oddly. "You're sure, Duke Callion? You didn't send a message for Pyrrha to meet you at the *Kyklopes?*"

"I haven't been near the *Kyk* —" Duke stopped suddenly, and his face tensed. "Pyrrha! She was here? She received such a message?"

"Yes. She left . . . oh, some minutes ago."

Duke cried, "Hurkan!" in a rage-choked voice. "He has always wanted her! Now he has trapped her!" He started for the door. Behind him Quelchal cried, "Here! Wait for me!" but Duke Callion was waiting for no one. On feet wingéd by fear for his bride, he was racing for the waterfront; for the dock at which was moored the *Kyklopes.*

There was no one on the deck of the *Kyklopes;* no one in sight on the docks, either, until Duke loosed a shout. Then an aged watchman tottered from his little shed to peer at wild-eyed young man quizzically.

"A man and a woman?" he replied to Duke's frenzied query. "Nay, there was no—Stay! There *were* footsteps on the dock here but minutes ago. I called but got no answer. I thought it was children playing, as they do."

"Footsteps? Which way?"

"Down there!" pointed the old watchman. And Duke was already leaping in the direction he indicated; down by the lesser wharf where the small fishing craft and *feluccas* were moored.

He was just in time to see a small, slim sailing vessel pushing off from the dock. A tiny craft at the helm of which stood a figure Duke recognized all too well. Hurkan! And huddled in the stern, strangely limp and silent, was the girl, Pyrrha!

RAGE spurred Duke Callion to greater speed than he knew he possessed. Already the tiny ship was yards away from the dock, and now its slight canvas was beginning to belly to the breeze. But Duke's mind was racing along with his feet. There was a spot, three hundred yards distant, where the boat must edge past the end of the wharf to run through the channel-bar. He swerved; cut in that direction.

It was man's puny strength against the untiring wind. For a prize, for a wager, Duke Callion could never have made it. But now he was running for the greatest of all prizes—love. And it was love that gave him strength to streak down that three hundred yards of salt-crusted planking, devour the last few feet at a heart-wrenching stride, and lunge himself into the air over twelve feet of rapidly widening water to land, sprawling on his hands and knees, momentarily stunned and helpless, on the

deck of the runaway sloop!

In that one moment, Duke Callion was at the mercy of Hurkan. But the ex-priest did not know it. He had not guessed that there was anyone within miles of him, and the element of surprise was Duke's salvation. Before Hurkan's stunned brain had time to react, Duke had regained his feet—and with his footing, his strength!

It was not love, now, but hate—complete, unadulterated and vicious—that drew back the corners of Duke Callion's mouth in a snarl. Like a great cat, without cry or warning, he flung himself upon Hurkan.

Hurkan loosed a great scream of rage. His hand tugged at his girdle; was locked there by Duke's iron grip. For an instant they stood there swaying, molded together by the sheer force of their enmity; then Duke's fist rose once, twice!

The anger mirrored on Hurkan's face faded into a look of numbed surprise. His jaw fell slack, and his eyes rolled backward, inward. He slumped to the deck.

In a flash, Duke was at Pyrrha's side. But now her eyes were open, and a tremulous smile hovered on her lips as she breathed,

"Duke! I knew you would—" Then those eyes became wide with sudden fright, and her voice broke into a scream. "Behind you! Duke!"

Duke wheeled; couched, ducked. Something hissed over his head. Steel death sang a crisp song by his ear; then whizzed past to splash into the bobbing depths beyond.

Hurkan had staggered to his feet and was reeling there drunkenly. Now, seeing that his cast weapon had failed to reach its mark, he spat like a caged cougar and turned. His sandaled feet scraped drily on the deck as he made to dive overside.

But Duke was off his feet in a diving tackle. He felt flesh between his arms; tightened them convulsively. Hurkan, now squealing in plaintive little mews, kicked and struggled. One boot glanced off Duke's head; streaming a shower of stars before the young man's eyes. But Duke's grim clutch grew tighter. His hands moved upward.

One instant they were straining there on the hard deck; the next Duke had sprung to his feet. His arm drew Hurkan to him; spun him around. The priest's throat was soft and yielding in the crook of his elbow. Duke panted,

"Look you well, Hurkan! It is the last you will see!"

THE man's eyes bulged. His face began to purple, and there were dry, choking rattles in his throat. Duke tightened. Hurkan's chest heaved aimlessly; vainly. He was throttling. His tongue writhed out between bloody lips; spurted as his teeth locked into it. Then he made one last, frantic, slipping movement to the side—

There was a sudden short, harsh sound! Duke let his arm fall away as Hurkan's body sank limply to the deck. Pyrrha screamed and covered her eyes with her hands. An involuntary shudder coursed through Duke. He said dazedly,

"He did it himself! Broke his own neck. But it is just as well, for I would have killed him . . ."

Then he stared down at his feet, startled. For a faint, choking voice whispered huskily,

"I'm not dead . . . yet . . . Duke Callion."

Duke gasped. By all rights the man should be in hell now. His head sprawled at a weird, unnatural angle to his body. Only his indomitable hatred kept him alive at all. That and—

"I will live . . . long enough,"

rasped that grave-cheating voice, "to see the end . . . of you all! Yes! Even now . . . it is *here!*"

The ship gave a sudden violent lurch. The afternoon sky, which had begun to dull into twilight, became a sheet of quivering flame that scorched Duke's eyes. There came a startled cry from Pyrrha. Duke looked shoreward.

The very sky seemed afire, and earth was atremble. Colhuacan. The guardian mount of Aztlan! It was spouting flame, smoke, ash! Erupting!

There was mockery in Hurkan's eyes as Duke crouched over him; demanded wildly, "What is this? Speak, dog! You know its meaning!"

"Do not . . . move my head . . . Duke Callion. I would . . . lie here and see . . . the end of the world.

"Yes . . . I know about this. I did it. My workmen bored a shaft . . . to the core . . . of Colhuacan. Turned . . . the icy sea waters . . . into its glowing heart. Aztlan . . . and all that it stands for . . . is about to perish!"

Comprehension swept suddenly over Duke Callion. He shouted, "The Deluge! *This* is how it is destined to come to pass! The Deluge!"

There was the palest ghost of a smile on Hurkan's lips now. He whispered, "Yes. You have bested me in . . . but one thing . . . Duke Callion. I could not have her . . . in life. But I will take . . . her vision . . . now . . . with me in death . . ."

And slowly, deliberately, Hurkan moved. Turned his head for the last time. Turned his face to look upon Pyrrha—and died.

Thus passed Hurkan the priest.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Deluge

DUKE cried, "Quelchal! Joey! Nata and the others! We must find them and get out of this!"

Swiftly he turned the drifting sloop about; began to manoeuver it in to harbor again. It took but minutes; still his body was clammy with exertion and apprehension when he finally rammed the skiff headlong into the lower wharf and leaped ashore with Pyrrha in his arms.

Aztlan had become a mad-house. With the first dull rumblings, curious heads had poked from doorways; seen the sheet of greasy fire that screened the sky. Now all sixty-four million inhabitants seemed to be in the streets of the capital city; jostling, pushing, asking questions to which there was no answer; racing aimlessly from one place to any other. Fruitlessly seeking security—for there was no security anywhere. Momentarily the rumblings from the bowels of Colhuacan grew deeper and more ominous. Each succeeding belch of living flame that leaped from the riven crest of the Crooked Mountain seemed to spiral higher into the tortured sky.

Now a light, dusty ash, scorching hot, began to fall from the livid heavens. Duke knew what that presaged. Volcanic ejaculation. Lava would be flowing, white-hot, on the slope of Colhuacan. He redoubled his speed; recklessly jamming a way through the crowds that hemmed his passage. Everywhere voices screamed mad queries. Some raised futile prayers to the gods. Others cursed the Titans, intuitive that this was their doing . . .

Somehow, above the din, Duke heard a voice calling his name. A hand tightened on his arm, and he turned to look into the face of Nata. The young captain's face was not frightened. There was a look of ecstacy in his eyes.

"You were right, Duke Callion! It is the end of the world for those who would not heed your warning! Come to my boat with me. All is prepared!"

Duke had to scream to make himself heard.

"I must find Quelchal and Joey! Go back and get ready to cast off! Get clear of the island before the sea rushes in!"

Nata pointed at Pyrrha; shouted, "Pyrrha! Shall I take her with me?"

The girl opened her eyes, hearing, and shook her head. "Where Duke Callion goes, there go I, too."

Nata fell back reluctantly. He cried, "I will wait for you until the last possible moment, Duke. Do not tarry too long!"

THEN he was gone; fighting through the milling mob back to the sequestered section of the harbor where he had moored his ship.

Above the incessant roaring of the crowd came the sound of earth screaming. A loud explosion. The ground beneath them shook, and immense columns of hot water and mud, mixed with brimstone, ashes, and *lapilli,* gushed from the crest of Colhuacan like a water-spout. The stifling stench of sulphur made breathing difficult, and Duke Callion, when he tried to wipe the sweat from his streaming brow, found his hand smeared with gray volcanic ash.

And then he was at the doorway of Quelchal's workshop; was breaking into the room where Quelchal rushed to greet him.

"You are all right, Duke Callion?"

"I am—yes! But Aztlan is doomed! Come, Quelchal—we must flee to the mountains! Save ourselves while there is still time!"

Quelchal shook his head. "It is too late! There is but one chance for me. That is to finish my ship before the sea rushes in. But, here—" He pressed an envelope into Duke's hand. Duke clutched it instinctively; rammed it into a pocket. "This will explain much, should we never meet again. And now—"

The door burst inward, and Duke cried out, "Joey!" as his companion raced into the shop. Behind him was the smiling Cym, Dwyfan, and his bride. But none of them were smiling now. Their clothing was in tatters; their bodies wet with plastered ash and mud. There was a deep bleeding scratch on Dwyfan's face. Dwyfach's alabaster beauty was concealed behind a mask of fear and anguish; her auburn tresses tumbled about her shoulders in a bedraggled cloud.

Joey cried in a grief-stricken voice, "It is the end, D-d-duke! The e-e-end of everything!"

"The others? Where are the others?"

Joey spread his arms in a helpless gesture.

"God knows. We were on the mountain when the explosion came. The top of the m-m-mountain blew off, and lava flooded down the mountain side. Valthgar was in his ship. He never heard our cries of warning before—" He shuddered, wiping a grimy hand across his eyes as though to erase the memory.

"And Ogyges? Yima? Angha?"

"Out there—s-s-somewhere—in that screaming mob. You can't tell f-f-friend from enemy. Did you find Hurkan?"

"Dead!" said Duke. "I killed him. But it was he who caused this."

Quelchal muttered, busy again with his tools, "It was fated to be so, Duke Callion. There was no way to escape it."

Dwyfan said impatiently, "There are still ships in the harbor. Nata is there. We must go, my friends!"

Again Quelchal shook his head.

"You go!" he answered. "I must stay. Duke—you will understand why. Later." The bronzed Atlantean bent once more over his incompleted time-ship. His hands flew from wire to wire

as he tightened, arranged, rearranged.

Indecision slashed at Duke Callion with torturing blades. He could not desert Quelchal. Yet—at his side was Pyrrha. She must live. And she would not desert him. Joey was tugging at him; screaming frantic pleas. Grudgingly he moved toward the doorway; glanced back for one final look.

"Goodbye, Quelchal—"

The Atlantean's hands never stopped moving. His eyes were warm with something deeper than friendship. He said in that sweet, mellow voice Duke was never afterward to forget,

"Not goodbye, Duke Callion. Just—till we meet again . . ."

Then once more they were out on the streets, but things had become graver since they had entered the little workshop. The sun had disappeared completely, now, behind a veil of stifling smoke and mud. But in its place, casting a weird, unearthly glow over the maddened city, was a ruddy pillar of flame emanating from the volcano; a livid glare that quivered wild, unnatural shadows over the faces about them.

The ground no longer pulsed under their feet; it shook like a live thing stricken with the ague. Duke had all he could do to stay on his feet. About him frenzied Atlanteans stumbled and fell, tore bleeding sores in their hands and knees, rose and tottered a few steps forward.

Now stones and bricks and masonry added to the hazard of the journey. Buildings collapsed about them; narrowly missing them as they toppled. Once as they quitted a narrow street, Duke looked behind to see that both walls of the street had caved suddenly inward, burying a thousand screaming, writhing souls beneath tons of detritus.

THE earth rolled, quaked and trembled. They were five specks of humanity caught in a plunging sea of fear. Five who strained every muscle, every thought, to keep together. They raced past the temple of Poseidon; saw how the walls had split asunder. The gold and ivory charioteer still lashed his silver, wingéd steeds toward Chaos. But as they watched, the mighty statue trembled. The effigy of King Poseidon lurched drunkenly and toppled sideways with a mighty crash. An agonized scream rose as men saw that crushing weight plunging toward them . . .

Then Joey screamed, "Duke—jump for your life!" and suddenly their grasp on each other's wrist was broken. A vast crevasse was splitting the street asunder; a hole dark and fearsome gaped like a hungry maw, gulped bodies of shrieking humans.

Duke saw Joey leap to safety; saw Dwyfan lift his fainting wife and carry her beyond the gigantic crack. He felt his own feet slide precariously beneath him; threw all his strength into a frantic backward leap.

He made it—but now Joey and Dwyfan were separated from him and Pyrrha by a crevice too wide for leaping. He saw Joey cup his hands to his mouth; sensed, rather than heard, Joey's cry,

"The harbor! To the ships . . ."

It was hard to breathe now. Each gulping mouthful of air seared his lungs as he drew in stifling ash and the foul stench of brimstone. Pyrrha was a drag on his arm. But still he staggered on; fighting, struggling, elbowing a way through the terrified crowd about him.

And now the docks were in sight. And here, indeed, humanity had gone mad. Every ship, every tiny *felucca,* was jammed to the gunwales with frantic, struggling humans who, oarless, made vain paddling movements at the turgid waters of the sound. Sails were lifeless

in the oppressive heat; weighted by inches of muddy effluvium from Colhuacan.

But it was only a short distance to Nata's ship. There, Duke knew, he would find haven. He scourged his aching body for one last ounce of strength to carry him on.

And then,

"The sea!"

The roar rose from a million throats; drowning out all tumult that had been before. Duke, looking seaward, saw that of which man had oft heard legend before, but never seen. The crest of the first tidal wave sweeping in on the doomed island of Aztlan. The forerunner of—the Deluge!

Like a great green wall, rimmed with white, it roared down upon the hapless port; a hundred feet high and terrible. It struck the ships at the harbor bar first; lifted them momentarily as though weighing them on a huge, cosmic balance, then chose amongst them with the cold imperviousness of a judicial god. Duke saw one ship . . . two . . . surmount that majestic crest miraculously. But others spilled over before it, dripping their screaming cargoes like shaken pods. And the mighty wave swept inward . . .

Duke's voice cracked on a great, forlorn cry.

"It is the end, Pyrrha! The end . . ."

And then, in that last, terrible moment, Pyrrha was in his arms, her arms locked about his neck, her lips welded to his, whispering,

"Then we die together, Duke Callion. It is all I ask!"

And their bodies were crushed together in a long, frantic, hungry kiss. . . .

Then the flood struck! Duke felt a mighty force descending upon him; battening, wrestling, plunging. His arms tightened about Pyrrha's form. There was cold about him; cold and wet and horror. His lungs were stifled for air. He kicked out vainly, fighting even in that last terrible moment for another second of life.

Something h a r d a n d unyielding struck him in the small of the back agonizingly. He felt himself toppling over backward . . . rising . . . rising. Then soft bells were in his ears; pealing their dainty chimes. A vast weakness surged over him, soothing the anguish of his weary body.

This, then, was death. It was not hard to drown, Duke thought languidly. To drift off into nothingness like this; all harshness forgotten, the world gone mad and torn apart. His love in his arms. . . .

CHAPTER XIX

Deucalion and Pyrrha

HE was dead. He was dead—and the old tales of a hell beyond the portals of death were true. This ghoulish light above him was the roofing of the underworld, and his nostrils shrivelled at the sulphurous breath of demons.

But—Pyrrha was at his side. Was bending over him, whispering in his ear, "Duke! Duke Callion! You are alive!"

Duke roused himself. Every bone and muscle in his body was strained and sore, as though he had gone through a thousand battles. To move was to suffer, but—he *lived!* He lay in the thwarts of a tiny, bobbing craft; a single-sailed felucca that somehow wallowed on the surface of the waters! It was warped, the single sail ripped and flapping, inches of water in the bottom, but it floated!

He cried, "Pyrrha!" and gathered her into his arms once again. There

was no need to say more. Both of them knew that a miracle had happened; that somehow the impartial sea had seen fit to spew them forth out of its hungry gorge with the craft that had been borne down upon them at the last moment.

The sea was a charnel house. All about them, on the mottled surface of the water, sprawled the bodies of the dead. Even the water seemed sluggish. Duke guessed why. Miles upon square miles of muddy land lay beneath; all the area of the Aztlan that was. Only one part of the doomed island still rose above the surface. That was the crooked knob of the destroying mountain iself—Colhuacan.

It was this which was spouting the lurid flames that Duke had thought the fires of Hades. But the glare was lessening, now; the streamers of greasy smoke twisting off in sultry spirals to die in the gray sky above.

And even as they watched,

"See! It is the end!" said Duke Callion. They stood silent as there came one final, convulsive burst of belching flame and lava from the mouth of the volcano. Then, like a foundering ship, the whole mountain seemed to rear up momentarily, stagger, and slide into the cold bosom of the sea.

Waters churned and bubbled where it had sunk, and a vast whirlpool eddied toward the explosive mount with a horrible sucking sound. Gruesome, bloated bodies swirled and bobbed toward the maelstrom with grotesque, swimming motions. Pyrrha moaned once, softly, and Duke turned her head into the protection of his shoulder.

"It is the end," he repeated dully. "Our warning was vain. These things had to be."

Then suddenly he remembered the envelope Quelchal had thrust into his hand during those last, hectic moments at the shop. He fished it out of his pocket. It was water-soaked, but legible. The sky was lightening with false dawn. Hunkered in the weaving craft, Duke read. . . .

"When you read this, Duke Callion, Aztlan will be no more. The hungry sea will have devoured it. The tapestry of Time will be justified.

"I write this in my shop, awaiting your coming. A strange sense of prescience is with me this morning, and I fear that ere the day ends, that will come to pass which I knew from the beginning must occur.

"Yes, I knew, Duke Callion! Forgive me—for I have lied to you, not once, but many times. Almost from the beginning, I knew that our journey into the past would end thus—but there was hope in my heart that through a miracle we might succeed in changing these Things that Be. I worked toward this miracle.

"Almost from the beginning. Not at first, Duke Callion. When we met in my hovel at Chunhubub, I did not know that Time's demands were inexorable; that in finding you, I had merely done that which the Fates had decided. I knew only that I had found a friend.

"Then we returned to Mayapan the Eld. And there it was that I first discovered that these adventures we have undergone together are not *new* adventures, but were written into the tapestry of Time long eons ago.

"It was when Mayapan deified Joey Cox, calling him Coxcox, that I first suspected the truth. For my reading had taught me, Duke Callion, that in ages past the Mayans worshipped a white god, Coxcox, god of flame and mystery, who came to them once, left them, and returned again. His name was Coxcox, and he was known as the double-tongued god. . . .

"My suspicions were verified when we met Dwyfan and Angha and Ogyges

and Yima in the dungeons of Titania. You had no way of knowing it, Duke Callion—by my studies had taught me that these names were the legendary names of men who escaped the Deluge; founded new dynasties after the sinking of Aztlan. The Sanscrit legends mention Angha, father of the human race. Ogyges is worshipped by Greece as the founder of humanity. The Welsh claim descent from Dwyfan and Dwyfach—two who escaped the Deluge.

"ABOUT yourself, Duke Callion, I pondered long. It is odd that it did not occur to me earlier . . . and that your marriage to the sweet Pyrrha did not give the clue I sought. But I tried, vainly, to reconcile your surname, Callion, with a hero of the past—and could not. It was but a short time ago that I recalled the diluvian legend of the Arameans, directly derived from that of Chaldea, as it was narrated in the celebrated Sanctuary of Hierapolis, or Babbyce. . . .

"The myth runs thus: that when the earth drowned in a sea of water, two escaped. A man and a woman. Their names were—Deucalion and Pyrrha!

"You, Duke Callion, are the 'Deucalion' of legend. This is so . . . this is constant . . . this is as it was and ever shall be. Our lives; yours and mine and Joey's and those of the men who suffered, laughed and fought with us, are inextricably bound, woven together into that huge tapestry we know as Time. Ever and again must we live this legend through; returning ever from the Twentieth Century to act our little rôles, then rest, at last, until the time comes for us to return again. . . .

"Unless—and this is our sole salvation, Duke Callion—I can somehow contrive to finish my second timeship before the Deluge. That is my prayer and my hope. If I can do this, I can return to the Aztlan of *my* time; give warning, and end forever this endless circle.

"You have no way of knowing that I fail or succeed. In this lifetime which now lies before you, we will never meet again.

"For my deception, I beg your forgiveness. In this strange new world into which I have led you, I ask you to remember only that of all things, Quelchal loved only one thing more than you. And that was—Aztlan!"

Duke finished reading. There was much in the letter which he did not understand. But slowly he began to see its meaning. And there were some things that gave him joy.

If Quelchal's words were true—and true they must be—Joey Cox was not dead. Somehow the "double-tongued god had survived the Deluge. In good time Joey would find his way back to the Mayapan he loved; there to reign again as "Coxcox."

Dwyfan and Dwyfach, too, were still alive. From their loins would spring a new race which ultimately would people that which, centuries hence, would be known as the British Isles. So, also, with Yima the Iranian, Angha of Boeotia, Chiba of Afric. And Nata.

Duke's eyes opened wide. Suddenly he was seeing the broad tapestry of Time from Quelchal's objective viewpoint. He was remembering the "humble, godfearing sailor" who, with his wife and children, "listened to the voice of God" and "built himself a huge ship." Filling the vessel with provisions, with animals and birds, "of every clean beast," preparing for a Deluge whilst crowds jeered. . . .

Nata! If the name of Duke Callion could become, in the distorted memories of men yet unborn, Deucalion—could

(Concluded on page 127)

» » STATIONS

By

WILLY LEY

PROMINENT AUTHORITY ON ROCKETRY, SPACE FLIGHT AND ASTRONAUTICS

IF somebody put the question to me of how the development of civilization would have been different — compared to actuality—if it had taken place on another planet, say Mars, I would hesitate very much to give any definite answers. There are too many more or less accidental factors involved that could not be determined just by logical thinking. And many of the fundamental facts are not even known well enough to serve as a basis for reasoning.

About one particular point, however, I would be quite certain. Space Travel would already exist if we lived on Mars.

There are various reasons for such an assertion. One is that the gravity of Mars is so much smaller while the energy stored in chemical compounds that might be used as fuels is necessarily the same as on Earth. Mars' "escape velocity" is only 4.97 kilometers (3 miles) per second as compared with that of Earth amounting to 11.2 kilometers (7 miles) per second. Which means that a space ship with motors having an exhaust velocity of 5 kilometers per second (a very efficient rocket motor using hydrogen as a fuel with liquid oxygen or liquid ozone could produce such an exhaust velocity), would have to carry only 2.72 times its own weight in fuels to attain escape velocity. To escape Earth's gravity the same space ship would have to carry at least ten times its own weight. That's the reason why space ships are difficult to design.

BUT Mars' lesser gravity is not the only reason. Even more important for the solution of the problem are its two tiny moons, each about six miles in diameter and circling the planet at distances of 5,860 miles (Phobos, in 7 hours and 39 minutes) and 17,160 miles (Deimos, in 30 hours and 18 minutes). It is evident that the nearness of these small moons would increase the efforts of Martian rocket enthusiasts considerably and silence the critics at the same time.

And after space travel were an accomplished fact Phobos and Deimos would be even more valuable. To reach them less than escape velocity would be needed, to depart from them would require only very small quantities of fuel. Martian space ships, therefore could set out on their exploratory trips with full fuel tanks after re-fueling on their moons. A similar advantage would hold true for returning space ships.

It would be much easier to land on one of the moons than on the planet itself, not only because they exert hardly any gravitational influence but also because the velocities of a returning ship and of one of the moons would match more closely than that of the returning ship and the planet. Thus a space ship could make a safe landing on a moon even if its fuel supply would be so low that an attempt of landing on the planet would be plain suicide.

All this certainly sounds nice but ap-

IN SPACE « «

Space travel will not be a reality by first building a space ship, but by constructing a practical space station as a take-off point

parently it does not help us very much to know these things since we are not living on Mars. Our own moon unfortunately does not offer any of these advantages. It is so far away and so huge itself that an attempt to use it as a fuel depot for space ships could be compared to a fuel depot in Cape Town for liners scheduled to cross the Atlantic from New York to Le Havre.

However, the existence of Phobos and Deimos is valuable to us even though we live on Earth. It constitutes an example of what space travel could gain by having near and comparatively small bodies like them around. In a way it is the same problem that confronted the pioneers of transatlantic air travel fifteen years ago. "If there were an island midway between America and Europe" they said. And since there was no such natural island in the desired position they contemplated the construction of an artificial (floating) island, as fuel depot, repair shop and temporary haven in bad weather.

EXACTLY the same idea exists in the realm of the growing science of astronautics. If there is no Phobos or Deimos around, why not build one? The idea may sound preposterous at first glance but actually it is very sound. It was introduced into science for the first time by Professor Hermann Oberth who wrote in his book "Die Rakete zu den Planetenräumen" (I am translating from the second edition of 1925).

"If we make space rockets of very large size circle around Earth they represent a kind of small moon. They don't have to be capable of descending to Earth anymore. Connection between them and the planet can be maintained by smaller rockets so that these large rockets (we'll call them observation stations) can be re-shaped more and more for their special purpose. If the steady absence of a feeling of gravity should have unhealthy consequences—which I doubt—two such rockets could be connected by a wire rope of a few miles in length and made to rotate around each other."

It may be necessary to add a word or two about the scientific principles of such a station. A body, moving horizontally at a velocity of about eight kilometers (5 miles) per second, does not drop to Earth anymore unless its velocity is influenced by air resistance or similar factors. This phenomenon which has received the name of "circular velocity" can be explained easily in simple language. It occurs whenever the spherical surface of a planet curves downward under the moving body just as fast as this moving body is pulled down by the gravity of the planet. Thus, although falling and falling without end it can never touch the surface of the planet, it falls *around* it. The horizontal velocity at which this occurs depends upon mass and size of the planet in question, in the case of Earth it is about 5 miles per second.

Naturally no fuel would be needed to keep such an artificial moon in space once "circular velocity" has been imparted to it and the orbit is well established.

WHEN Professor Oberth wrote the words quoted above he foresaw many of the possible uses of such a station, astronomical and terrestrial observations, scientific experiments of all kinds under new conditions (large airless space at the disposal of the experimenters, freedom from gravity drag and other disturbing factors) and he also realized the advantages for space flight itself. But he believed that such a station would be one of the later results of space travel.

To give but one example: A space ship designed to take off from Earth for a trip to the moon and back, carrying several passengers and necessary provisions, would weigh about as much as a medium sized ocean liner. In order to take off the amount of forty tons of fuel would have to be burned during the first second. If the ship were to reach a station 5000 kilometers (3000 miles) from the surface the amount of fuel to be burned during the first second is only about two tons. To take off from the station for the Moon would require only 400 pounds of fuel per second!

The advantage does not lie in the saving of fuel, as may be thought. The ship would have to re-fuel on the station and since the fuel for re-fueling has to be brought there—thus necessitating the expenditure of more fuel to carry it up—there is no saving if the whole procedure is considered. But it will be very much easier to build rocket motors burning two tons of fuel per second at the most than to construct monsters with a capacity of 40 tons per second.

IT is not impossible that all attempts of flying to the moon may be foredoomed to failure in spite of theoretical probability just because the rocket motors cannot burn sufficient quantities of fuel at the beginning of the flight when the ship is still heavy with more fuel. But there is hardly any doubt that rocket motors powerful enough to impart circular velocity to the ship will be developed some time. And with circular velocity the station in space can be constructed and after that space travel has ceased to present difficulties.

Even while building the station the engineers in charge will experience a number of pleasant surprises. They will have to keep in mind constantly that every pound of material to be transported into space will require tremendous amounts of fuel. But they will also find that the number of pounds to be carried will be surprisingly small.

Since the whole thing is falling freely all the time there are practically no strains and stresses to be considered, everything can be built so flimsily that it would not last for seconds on the surface of Earth. The reflecting mirror of a large telescope, for example, could be thinner than a watch crystal and to hold it in position three quarter inch magnesium rods would be ample. . . . Oberth, when reading this, will probably mutter that a tenth of an inch would do just as well. And he'd be right.

Realizing all the advantages briefly touched in this article it is easy to predict than one day there will be a station in space. The idea will not be abandoned like that of an artificial island in the Altantic because a station in space will always have definite uses of its own and will be valuable to space ships even if they (say after the advent of atomic power) would not need it anymore.

Do Cave Men Still Live?

By James F. Scheer

Persistent stories continue to come out of Canada telling of the existence of a tribe of primitive cave men still living

THERE are strange whisperings among the Chehalis Indians and those of the Skwah reservation in the mountainous Harrison Lake District of British Columbia, Canada.

They walk warily in the forests. They keep their eyes and ears wide open for one reason. The Sasquatch, giant, hairy men have again been seen in the region.

For more than twenty-five years now most of the white men near Harrison Lake have pooh-poohed the Indians' stories that such a forgotten race of hairy giants is living in the mountain caves. But recently reports have been so numerous that the Vancouver Museum is about to make an investigation.

The awakened interest of the Vancouver Museum, plus the fact that archaeologists have dug up a race of giants in Mexican mountains, indicates that there may be fact in the stories.

Several century old legends of the Chehalis tribe give almost the same description of the Sasquatch as are offered by today's witnesses—both white men and Indians.

Not long ago an Indian boy was chased by a naked, hair-covered creature near Harrison Mills.

"I thought it was an animal at first," he said. "But I looked closer into the brush and I saw it was a man. He was very tall—maybe seven feet or more! His face was ugly. He had long arms that reached his knees. He chased me, but I was so scared I ran too fast!"

An occasional witness says that the Sasquatch have broad noses that spread over most of their faces. On this point exist the only differences of opinion.

Further evidence that Sasquatch may be living in the vast mountain wilderness has been uncovered by Captain A. Warde, who has examined some of the rocky caverns and found remains of fires and also odd inscriptions chiseled in the rock—inscriptions far different from any used by the Chehalis.

Anthropologists still refuse to believe that there are such creatures as Sasquatch, but meanwhile the Chehalis tribe records new sight evidence.

Recently an Indian named Tom Cedar was fishing from his canoe on Morris creek. He was near the high overhanging bank when a large rock splashed into the water.

Drenched, he wiped the water from his eyes and looked up angrily. What he saw made him goggle with fright. There on the stony ledge was a barrel-chested, hairy giant who had a second rock in his hands and threw it at Cedar. But Cedar paddled furiously and escaped.

Most of the Sasquatch seen by the

natives in and around Harrison Lake have attempted to harm someone. And the one Peter Williams, a Chehalis Indian, encountered was no exception.

"It happened on a May night," he explained. "I was something like a mile from the reserve near the foot of a mountain when something rose out of the thickets. It looked like a great black bear on its hind legs at first.

"It ran toward me, and I knew it was a man. I ran toward my canoe. I heard the Sasquatch crashing through the brush after me. I paddled across the stream. It is a shallow one, and the giant waded out after me. I reached the other side, jumped out, and ran into my house, bolting the door behind me."

And Peter Williams' brother Paul had an equally harrowing experience.

"I was fishing on the bank of the creek when I heard a branch break," he said. "It was some distance behind me. I turned and saw a giant coming toward me. I ran, but he didn't chase me far. I saw him snatch the fish I had caught and go back into the woods."

Both brothers claim to have seen a Sasquatch man and woman recently. But the hairy creatures did not follow.

Usually when people who live near Harrison Lake see the hairy men it is spring. And every fourth year during spring they encounter more Sasquatch than ordinarily.

Verbal records of the Chehalis Indians for more than three generations show that there is some sort of signal fire burning on the tallest peak of the Chehalis range every fourth year in springtime. The fire burns for four nights and then disappears.

"These are fires of worship made by the Sasquatch," the Indians claim.

A native of Chilliwack, Charles Victor, who did not believe much in the signal or religious fire and who doubted that there was any such thing as a Sasquatch tells that his doubt vanished while he and friends were in swimming near Yale.

"I looked toward the bank and there among the trees I saw a huge man, naked and hairy, watching us curiously. He had big eyes and looked very kind. I was about to speak to him when he ran back into the woods."

One of the few white men to see a Sasquatch is Herbert Point, of Agassiz. He and his girl friend were picnicking on the outskirts of the little town when they saw a grotesque figure of a man approaching them.

"He was twice as big as the average man," said Point. "He had arms that almost touched the ground and a hairy body like an animal."

Women as well as men have been frozen with fright by the Sasquatch. A woman who lives on the outskirts of the tiny town, Harrison Mills, was doing her weekly washing when she heard a low growling noise.

On the edge of the clearing, a huge hair-covered man loomed up suddenly. The woman, in fright, fell into her wash tub with a splash. Terrified, she pulled herself out and started to run. But the cave man had disappeared.

Yes, the eye-witness' stories are many. But most of them are told by Indians. And British Columbians generally take them with a barrel of salt.

Chehalis Indians are rapidly becoming more shy of telling their experiences with Sasquatch to white men. They are too proud a tribe to stand the scoffing and laughter. Yet today they are finding some satisfaction. Perhaps soon their stories will be proved.

Now the Vancouver Museum is to investigate—to scour the Harrison Lake country, forest and caves for the Sasquatch—to prove once and for all that there is or isn't a strange race of giant cave men in British Columbia!

SONS OF THE DELUGE

(Concluded from page 121)

not Nata's name become . . . Noé . . . eventually . . . Noah?

HURKAN,* too. Quelchal had not mentioned him, but Duke knew that somewhere in history *must* persist a legend of his perfidy. With so many who had hated him alive.

It was all very puzzling. And Duke Callion, ever more the man of action than of conjecture, roused himself.

False Dawn had ended, and the little ship rolled lazily on the bosom of a slothful, brackish sea. Off to the East shone the rising sun, now gallantly struggling to burst through the veil of sultry ash that sifted down from the heavens. A faint breeze stirred from westward, flapping the sails of his tiny craft restlessly.

Duke studied the damage. Yes, he decided, a man could restore the ship to good condition. And a man and his wife could sail it to land. To a bright new land of promise, where awaited them more adventures.

Upon their s h o u l d e r s—his and Pyrrha's—lay a great obligation. A new race was theirs to found. They it was who must preserve what little knowledge, what culture, remained of Aztlan the Eld. Until such time as, in the far-distant future, a bright-eyed, younger Duke Callion should once more set forth from Chunhub upon a backward journey into Time to prevent that which *was,* and evermore was to be.

Pyrrha interrupted his reverie softly. She said, "Look, Duke Callion. The sun is finding a way through the vapors!"

"It greets a new world," he murmured. "A world that is yours—and mine!"

He crushed her to him for a long moment. Her soft, sweet fragrance more than repaid the world he had lost forever. He kissed her again . . . and yet again. Then he turned to ponder the problem of mending that torn sail. There was a frown on his forehead; an itching impatience in his fingers.

For the father of a new race, there is much work to be done. . . .

*"Then the waters were agitated by the will of the Heart of Heaven, Hurkan, and a great inundation came upon the heads of these creatures. . . . They were ingulfed, and a resinous thickness descended from heaven . . . the face of the earth was obscured, and a heavy, darkening rain commenced—rain by day and rain by night. . . . There was heard above their heads a great noise, as if produced by fire.

"Then were men seen running, pushing each other, filled with dismay; they wished to climb upon their houses and the houses, tumbling down, fell to the ground; they wished to climb upon the trees and the trees shook them off. . . . Water and fire contributed to the universal ruin at the time of the last great cataclysm which preceded the fourth creation."—The "Popul Vuh," sacred book of the Central American Indians.

UNDER FIRE WITH THE SIGNAL CORPS PHOTOGRAPHERS!

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JANUARY ISSUE

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Popular Photography

ADAM LINK'S VENGEANCE

(Concluded from page 27)

I aimed another blow, straight for what would be the human jaw.

Suddenly it was over.

The other robot's arms dropped. There was a stunned, dazed air about the whole body. It swayed a moment, then its knee swivels bent and it crashed to Earth. It lay sprawled, eyes closed.

For a long moment I stared. I heard no sound from the other body. It lay utterly rigid, quiet. And then I realized it was dead. The brain had died first. My final blow had killed Eve!

I stood looking down at the battered wreck. I looked beyond it. I could almost see a body like Kay's lying there, a human body, the real Eve. Her eyes were closed. Perhaps there was a peaceful smile on the lips.

I turned slowly.

Slowly, my steps dragging, I strode for the cabin, to confront the man who had killed my Eve. The man who considered us nothing more than mechanical puppets, with which he could play as he desired.

Hillory darted out of the door. His face was a ghastly white. I clutched at him, caught his coat, but he tore loose. He ran, as though from some monster. And at that moment, I *was* a monster. I pounded after him. What things I screeched, I do not know.

He ran past the edge of the cliff, taking the shortest course to the road. Abruptly a great piece of the cliff-edge parted from its matrix. The stupendous vibrations of our battle had loosened the piece. It plunged below. Hillory was on it.

I dug my foot-plates into the soil and leaned backward, barely halting at the edge of the fissure. I looked down. I saw the white dot of Hillory's body land. I knew he hadn't survived the fall.

I am writing this now, in the cabin. When I am done, I will go with Eve. There may not be a heaven for robots. But neither is there a hell—unless Earth is it.

30 YEARS WITH THE U. S. A. SIGNAL CORPS

The Signal Corps of the United States Army offers qualified young men an opportunity to learn radio by practical, modern methods, and at the same time receive pay, clothing, living quarters, medical attention, and retirement privileges. Follow a typical young American from the time he enlists until he retires . . . then judge for yourself whether or not our Army presents the most attractive radio proposition for those who are ambitious to advance. Don't fail to read this stimulating account of the U. S. A. Signal Corps, just one of the many brilliant features in the

★ *January Issue* ★

RADIO NEWS

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TRUTH IS A PLAGUE!

(Concluded from page 75)

cage in which Doris was lying. Time was a blur now, and every frantic second spent in tearing at the bolt fastenings seemed like a section of eternity. He knew he wasn't going to make it, felt his legs growing weak in their grip around the cable, felt the flesh tearing open wider and wider on the hand clutching the coil. But he continued feverishly.

The grilled siding was almost opened, one more bolt, it was loose. . . .

Through the daze of sweat, exhaustion and pain Randell knew that he had to throw all his weight over the half-side of the death car, and as he realized the fact, he caught a split-second vision of the vial of nitroglycerine on the floor, of the control lever that might slip with the slightest jarring of the cage.

He grabbed, releasing all but his legs from the cable, got his elbows over the side of the car. Now his legs were free, and he was clambering into the tiny elevator, making for the controls. . . .

DORIS stood close against Lance Randell, and his arms were around her. They stood in the street outside the Weston Towers. The angry howl of the city had subsided to a tranquil hum, above which could be heard the drone of many airplanes, growing softer, fainter.

Tiny grains of sand were falling in many places over the city, but they were unfelt, locked in droplets of rain. And the rain kept falling gently, steadily, washing away the madness and sorrow and death that a plague of truth had given freedom.

Lance Randell looked down at the girl.

"Why, darling," he said softly, "you're crying!"

She turned her face upward. "No," she murmured, "it's just the rain on my cheeks."

He drew her tighter. "Liar," he whispered. . . .

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Acts of Congress of August 24, 1912, and March 3, 1933, of Amazing Stories, published monthly at Chicago, Illinois, for February, 1940. State of Illinois, County of Cook, ss. Before me, a notary public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared A. T. Pullen, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the business manager of Amazing Stories and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, W. B. Ziff, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.; Editor, B. G. Davis, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.; Managing Editor, R. Palmer, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.; Business Manager, A. T. Pullen, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. 2. That the owner is (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.) Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.; W. B. Ziff Co., 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.; W. B. Ziff, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill., B. G. Davis, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.) None. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. 5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the twelve months preceding the date shown above is ..... (This information is required from daily publications only.) A. T. Pullen, Business Manager. (Signature of business manager.)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of September, 1939.

[Seal.] M. Chass, Notary Public. (My commission expires February 26, 1940.)

(Continued from page 7)

Let us say, for instance, that the Earth's day becomes 36 hours long. 18 hours of night and 18 hours of day. The human being is an adaptable creature. He has slept during the dark hours for long ages. He will no doubt continue to do so. Thus, if the change were to come about gradually, he would increase his sleeping period to conform. And therefore, he would *cut down* his waking hours to *one half* of his life, instead of *one third*, as is the case with the present setup.

AND now, all you sharks who are about to swarm all over us, when we begin to say the reverse would need to occur, we *aren't* going to say it. The reason is obvious. Cut the day to 5 hours and the night to five hours (in other words make the rotation time of the earth 10 hours instead of 24) and we find that adaptable human being sleeping *half* his life away instead of one third, because he fails to adapt himself to the extent of three hours, and sleeps *all night*. At least, we think that's what would happen. So, in our opinion, any change in the rotation time of the Earth, either faster or slower, would result in a *loss* of waking hours to mankind. So let's not change, eh?

HERE'S a note that might interest you who follow the fortunes of science fiction authors Orlin Tremaine, who has done a lot of science fiction, can also do other material in bang-up style. He's in SOUTH SEA STORIES, *Amazing's* new sister magazine, with a fascinating adventure story Why not try the south sea atmosphere?

REMEMBER the "future air" stories that the old *Amazing Stories* used to feature as science fiction? Well, they're fact today, and *Amazing's* new brother, AIR ADVENTURES might be called Air Science Fiction. It's strictly modern, and we advise you to try a copy.

OUR back cover this month is on evolution, and what might happen if cosmic rays should send it running wild. Scientifically, this is something that could easily happen, and is just an example of the delicate balance this planet maintains for its living creatures.

WHICH winds up the Observatory clock for this issue. See you next month.

Rap

BEGINNING NEXT MONTH!

ALFRED R. STEBER'S GREATEST STORY

BLACK WORLD

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Board the British Space Liner *Josephine* with Interplanetary Patrolman John Carver, Scientist Caldwell, and Interplanetary Sportswoman Ina Malden, bound for Titan and treat yourself to a ride to the finest entertainment in many a moon! Here's a story that will linger in your memory. It's one of the finest space stories we have ever read. A long novel, presented in two big installments. As you read, you'll ask yourself: "Who is the mystery pirate What incredible scientific marvel does Professor Caldwell seek on the Black World? What menace threatens earth because of this mystery in the depths of space? The answer will stagger you. "Black World" is the interplanetary novel of the year! Don't miss the first installment in the

BIG MARCH ISSUE

AMAZING STORIES

ON SALE JANUARY 10

Science Quiz

The following quiz has been prepared as a pleasant means of testing your knowledge of things scientific and pseudo-scientific. We offer it solely for the pleasure it gives you and with the hope that it will provide you with many bits of information that will help you to enjoy the stories in this magazine. If you rate 50% correct in your answers, you are considerably ahead of the average. Give yourself 2½ points for each correct answer.

A MATTER OF CHOICE

1—The best way to cure myopia would be to—(1) eat starchy foods; (2) wear glasses; (3) exercise the affected area; (4) bath regularly.

2—We are probably all vaccinated, but if you weren't you would contact—(1) measles; (2) typhoid fever; (3) smallpox; (4) spirocheta-pallida.

3—A drug that's prepared from Indian Hemp is—(1) Codeine; (2) Opium; (3) Heroin; (4) Hashish.

4—The disease of sciatica would cause you to have pain in the—(1) neck; (2) hip; (3) head; (4) heart.

5—The type of soil that would hold the most water would me—(1) sand (2) rich loam (3) gravel (4) dried leaves.

6—A frog's tongue is attached at the—(1) front; (2) back; (3) side, (4) top of the mouth.

7—A diamond is composed of practically the same material as—(1) iron; (2) coal; (3) lead; (4) copper.

8—The earth is nearest the sun in—(1) autumn; (2) summer; (3) spring; (4) winter.

9—The new discovered nylon, which is a synthetic silk, is made of—(1) coal; (2) glass; (3) rubber; (4) tires.

10—A deficiency of vitamin B would cause—(1) scurvy; (2) beri-beri; (3) pellegra; (4) rickets.

BRAIN WORK!

1—If one ergon is the resistance of two dynes over a distance of one centimeter then what is the work of an eschatologist? But if one ergon is not the resistance of two dynes over a distance of one centimeter then for what purpose is a larynogoscope used?

2—If a zygospore is not the union of two gametes then by what type of mosquito is malaria fever transmitted? But if a zygospore is the union of two gametics, what is cretinism?

3—If sodium chloride is common table salt then what is the heaviest element? But if sodium is not common table salt then what is heliotherapy?

4—If the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal 360 degrees then is it possible to find the square root of a negative number? But if the sum of the angles of a triangle does not equal 360 degrees then how many stars are there in the big dipper?

5—If water is the combination of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen then how many incisors are found in the human mouth? But if water is not the combination of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen then what is the distance of the earth to the sun?

MATCH THESE!

1—Constellations

( ) 1—Aries	A—the lion
( ) 2—Cancer	B—the ram
( ) 3—Leo	C the warrior
( ) 4—Taurus	D—the crab
( ) 5—Orion	E—the bull

2—"Ologies"

( ) 1—Ornithology	A—rocks
( ) 2—Geology	B—germs
( ) 3—Bacteriology	C—man
( ) 4—Anthropology	D—stars
( ) 5—Astrology	E—birds

3—Elements

( ) 1—Copper	A—Fe
( ) 2—Sodium	B—Au
( ) 3—Iron	C—Cu
( ) 4—Tin	D—Na
( ) 5—Gold	E—Sn

4—"Meters"

( ) 1—Odometer	A—used to determine specific gravity.
( ) 2—Variometer	B—used to detect adulterants.
( ) 3—Hydrometer	C—instrument by which hardness of metals can be ascertained.
( ) 4—Diagnometer	D—measures distance
( ) 5—Sclerometer	E—measures magnetic forces on earth.

5—Alphabetic Science

( ) 1—T	A—ray
( ) 2—Y	B—clef
( ) 3—X	C—wrench
( ) 4—G	D—tube
( ) 5—S	E—square

(Answers on page 142)

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

This department will be conducted each month as a source of information for our readers. Address your letters to Question and Answer Department. AMAZING STORIES, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Q. *Do scientists know anything about the temperature of Mars?—Erwin Wilson, Birmingham, Alabama.*

A. According to observations made by Dr. Coblentz of the Bureau of Standards, during a recent opposition, the surface temperature of Mars seems to be warmer than it had been previously estimated. He discovered that its daytime temperature, around noon, was sometimes as high as 40 degrees to 60 degrees Fahrenheit. This is very well suited to human life, and as far as temperature goes, we would not be inconvenienced. These temperature tests were made with red and violet light, which revealed a much denser atmosphere than had been previously supposed. This discovery raises the surface temperature readings.

* * *

Q. *What means is used to measure the gravity of another planet? How can these findings be considered accurate?—A. K. D., St. Louis, Mo.*

A. We compute the surface gravity of other worlds by dividing the planet's mass relative to that of earth—by the square of its diameter. Since these computations are based on Earth standards, we can be fairly certain that they would be accurate on a body which is much the same in relative makeup. Thus we find that we can compute other planet gravities by Earth standards, and discover that a body weighing 100 pounds on Earth would weigh only 82 on Venus and 38 on Mars, etc.

* * *

Q. *What does radium look like?—Harry H. Gardner, Western Springs, Illinois.*

A. In the form in which it is usually sold, radium appears as a white or nearly white substance which looks very much like common salt, or baking soda. It is obtained from the ores in the form of hydrous sulphate, chloride, or bromide, and it is these salts which are in commercial use.

* * *

Q. *The asphalt used in paving roads is supposed to come from two sources. If there is any other source than Trinidad, where is it?—M. James, Tucson, Arizona.*

A. Your information is nearly correct. There *are* two *kinds* of asphalt, but they come from more than two places. Natural asphalt is found in Trinidad, in Bermuda, in Venezuela, and other places. It is found in natural deposits generally in the form of lakes. The other type of asphalt is a result of distilling asphaltic crude oil from the wells of Texas, Oklahoma, California, and Mexico. This oil is distilled into kerosene, gasoline, etc, and the residue hardens into a substance known as asphaltic cement. It is this cement that is most used to build roads.

* * *

Q. *How many different kinds of fish are there?—Ole Olson, Red Wing, Minn.*

A. There are about 20,000 kinds of true fishes.

* * *

Q. *How long is a link, surveyor's measure?—Gilbert Stetz, Buffalo, New York.*

A. A link is 7.92 inches.

* * *

Q. *What are the names of some of the plants that eat flies and other insects?—L. B.*

A. The Venus Flytrap is the most widely and popularly known. Others are the sarracenia, the teasel, and the nepenthes. There are still others, not generally classified.

* * *

Q. *Does the compass always point due north, or is there some variation? What is meant by the "line of no variation" mentioned in the Coast and Geodetic Survey?—Dorothy Reinold, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

A. No, the compass does not always point due north. In fact, it is only on the "line of no variation" you mention that it does. This line has been charted as running through western South Carolina, and N. N. W. through Michigan, in the United States. The line is quite irregular, and seems to have no definite delineation. It may be seen on the isogonic chart of the United States, dated 1920.

* * *

Q. *What is the speediest animal?—Arthur Tatum, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.*

A. The cheetah, used in India as a hunting leopard, is supposed to be the fleetest of four footed animals. However, the cheetah is not a distance runner, and its speed is confined solely to short dashes. It can run down any antelope or deer in a very short time.

* * *

Q. *Noting your illustrated feature on Mt. Everest, I am curious to know if the Matterhorn has ever been climbed?—Charles E. Beard, Covington, Kentucky.*

A. On July 14, 1865, a party of mountain climbers headed by E. Whymper, climbed the Matterhorn, the first to accomplish the feat. Their ascent has been duplicated several times since. Three of the party, and the guide were killed on the initial attempt.

MONTHLY MERIT AWARD

RALPH MILNE FARLEY, "The Hidden Universe," $50.00
DON JOHNSON, 3530 Kenwood Ave., Kansas City, Mo., $10.00

There you are, readers; the winners in the December issue contest. Mr. Farley has hung up the enviable record of having duplicated his rating (81%) for the second time on his serial (which ties the only other 81% rating thus far, which went to David V. Reed for his "Where Is Roger Davis"). So, for winning first place with both installments of his serial, there can be no question of Mr. Farley's right to the prize. Nor can there be any question to his right to say "I have written the most popular story in AMAZING STORIES since the Merit Award went into effect."

Congratulations, Ralph, and come again. Incidentally your editor feels a little bit inclined to brag on this one, because he really pushed this yarn through, and left his record for judgment entirely in the readers' gentle hands. The record is now in "prize winning" shape.

Our congratulations also, to Don Johnson for his letter and his good judgment in selecting the stories in almost correct order. Don missed only on the last two. He had 'em reversed.

The rating of the stories in the December issue follows:

	Story	*Votes*	*Rating*
1.	The Hidden Universe	1309	.81
2.	Hok Goes to Atlantis	1230	.76
3.	Fugitives From Earth	1189	.73
4.	Ben Gleed, King of Speed	727	.45
5.	Gulpers Versus Earthmen	684	.42
6.	Liners of Space	677	.42

Now let's have plenty of action in the contest for February. It's a fine bunch of stories, in your editor's opinion, and you'll be doing yourself a favor by reading them fast, and sending in your vote. Don't forget that $10.00 is "easy money" for a reader who knows what he wants to read. Get in on the voting! Only two things to do: rate the stories and write a "best" letter.

CLIP THIS COUPON AND MAIL

Amazing Stories,
608 S. Dearborn Street,
Chicago, Illinois.

In my opinion the stories in the February issue of AMAZING STORIES rank as follows:

	No. Here
ADAM LINK'S VENGEANCE	_____
ROCKETS OVER EUROPE	_____
UNDERSEA PRISONER	_____
TRUTH IS A PLAGUE!	_____
THE THIRTEENTH MR. TUMPS	_____
SONS OF THE DELUGE	_____

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State.....

Attached is my letter of 20 words or more, on my reason for selecing story number one for that position. ☐ Check here.

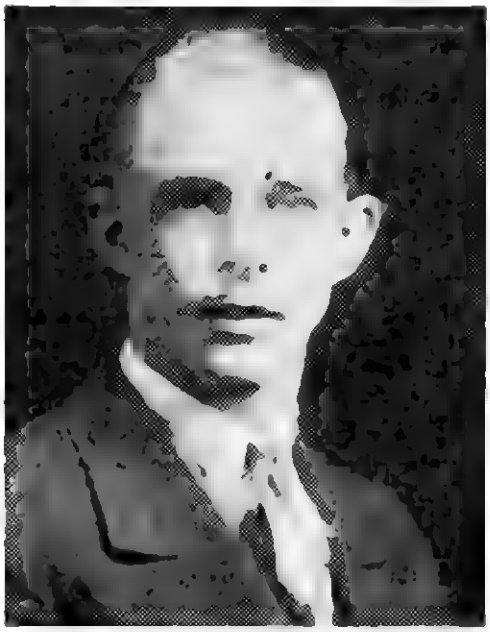
Meet the Authors

RICHARD O. LEWIS — Author of THE THIRTEENTH MR. TUMPS

I AM elated! I am the happiest man in the world! I am walking feet-foremost among the clouds!

And I'll tell you why: Ever since I can remember, I have had the secret desire to write the *Story of My Life*. (Who hasn't!) And here, at the request of the editor, is my golden opportunity. The realization of my dream.

On second thought, maybe I'm not so happy after all. Here at hand is my golden opportunity —and I don't know where to begin. But, after all, I suppose I should start at the very beginning — that being the obvious place to begin such ventures.



RICHARD O. LEWIS

Anyway, you're stuck with it. And so you may as well raise the curtain gently and settle back comfortably into your seats while I give you a short concert of egotistical horn-tooting.

I was born on the Ides of March a few years after the turn of the century just south of the sunny side of a slack pile in an unmapped coal-mining camp somewhere in the corn-belt.

I became extremely dizzy as a youth from wandering around and around that slack pile, and have been slightly confused ever since.

I was subjected to the formalities of high school and college. I remember very little concerning high school, except that I usually kept my desk littered with silly books on astronomy, electricity, chemistry and other subjects quite foreign to the school's curriculum.

The local superintendent of schools predicted a future for me, a future far from rosy. (And how right he was!)

I was too busy working my way through college to remember too much about that phase of my life. I quit once to travel for a season with Christy Bros. Big Five-Ring Wild Animal Show. During that time, I held the most laudable position of band director of a clown band which couldn't blow a note.

Back to college again—broke.

I found a girl from my home town who was also working her way through. We compared living expenses one evening and came to that time-worn conclusion that two could live as cheaply as one. We were married the next week in the Little Brown Church in the Vale—from the song of the same name.

After that, I scrubbed out a little cafe each morning, worked in a truck garden every afternoon, ate tomatoes three times a day and played cornet in a theatre orchestra at night. I even attended a few of my classes.

Christmas time (don't let anyone kid you) found me irreparably broke, nearly destitute of raiment and ready to dig ditches — any kind of ditches for anybody.

A phone call saved the day. I had been elected to finish out the year as a teacher in a small town, a teacher of music and a boy's physical education.

I lasted five years.

From the above, one might get the impression that, after all, I am just a normal sort of person. But I am not. Far from it. I have an affliction. It is a strange malady known as *fishitis* — a type of amnesia which causes the patient to forget position, family, home and all other unimportant things and to go wandering about through the country with a pocket full of dreams and a hat full of fish-hooks.

Once, I awakened to find myself floundering about in a trout stream high up in the Rocky Mountains.

Another time, I found myself far up in the wilds of central Canada with a companion, eighty-five pounds of dried food, a canoe and an aching back.

At still another time, I came to out on the Gulf of Mexico with a row-boat full of young hammer-head sharks, sting rays, mullet, croaker, trout, flying-fish and what-nots. Outside the boat

was tied an alligator-gar who had proven to be a better man than I. (After several attempts to get him into the boat, and after getting knocked down just that many times, I had finally decided that there was room enough in the boat for only one of us.)

Many times, I have been found wandering about various lakes and rivers. Three times last summer. On one of those occasions, I was a hundred miles down a muddy river in an oddly-shaped, leaky craft of my own uncertain construction.

The malady, once it gets hold of you, is persistent. It never lets you rest. Right now it is telling me I should sail around the world in a twenty-foot boat. Some day I shall probably awaken to find myself . . .

But why go on explaining this disease! Anyone who has been afflicted with it knows its symptomology as well as I, and anyone not afflicted with it wouldn't understand anyway.

My first experience at writing was during college. I sent an article to a farm magazine. Six months later, I received a check for $9. But, for some reason, the article never came out in print.

Later on, through down-right cussedness and persistence, I broke down the resistance of a few more editors and began to sell—yes, you guessed it—fishing articles.

Science-fiction now claims my entire attention. Had Fate dealt the cards differently at the start, I may have been one of those individuals who trial and error among test tubes. My interest—other than fishing and writing—lies in that direction.

I suppose I shall never become a truly great writer under the generally accepted standards. That is because I do not have the soul of the artist, I guess. For instance, I can't for the life of me tell why classical music is better than swing. I can't say why trout-fishing is a better sport than cat-fishing. (Personally, I think it isn't. There will be but a few mosquito-bitten old mud-footers who will agree with me on this.) And I can't see why slicks are better reading than pulps.

No artistic soul, you see.

The pulps, I believe, have a very definite literary place among us. Between those bright covers is mystery, adventure, romance, humor, dreams —and I love them for it.

Science-fiction, I think we will all agree on this, is the best of them all. If I didn't think so, I would be writing something else. And if you didn't think so, you wouldn't be reading this.

When AMAZING STORIES' editor requested this sketch and a picture, to be sent to him immediately, it threw this household into more confusion than a proposed camping trip could. The entire family possessions were instantly turned upside down and inside out in a frantic search for a picture.

There were pictures of Aunt Minnie when she was a little girl, pictures of Uncle Bill, pictures of Grandfather in his soldier uniform, pictures of boats, of the children, of hundreds of fish and lakes and rivers and all sorts of things. But was there a picture of me anywhere? No.

Finally, after an hour or so, two were found. One a snap shot, the other a beautiful obviously-posed one. I am sending them both along, hoping he will throw them away.

In case he does toss them out the window, I will give you, in their place, a sort of bird's eye view of myself. You may be sure that I will not flatter myself in any way, because, if I do, it would be just like the editor to print one of those pictures just to show me up.

To begin with, I am not exactly a he-man type. I am about average in height and a trifle on the lean side in build. My ears stick out sideways a bit farther than I care to admit and here lately my light hair seems to have gotten an idea of travel. I don't know where it is going—but it is.

I wear a pale moustache which is visible at ten paces by actual count. This adds nothing whatever to my beauty, but is a great aid when it comes to cornet playing.

I am restless by nature and am constantly getting fed-up on civilization. I would rather live in a tent than in anything else. I promise myself every season that the next season will find me up and away from civilization for good. But the next season always finds me just where I was the last one.

You may ring down the curtain now and awaken from your peaceful slumbers. I can't think of anything else to say about myself.—*Richard O. Lewis, Oskaloosa, Iowa.*

ALLIED-NAZI WARPLANE PHOTOS!

Here's an outstanding collection of authentic air war pictures taken right at the scenes of action! Bombing operations against a Nazi submarine . . . British bomber shot down at Wilhelmshaven . . . German Messerschmitt fighter brought down by French anti-aircraft gunners . . . Fairey bombers in battle formation . . . Swastikaed war-bird downed in Scotland! Don't miss this brilliant camera coverage of Europe's air war in the

★ ***JANUARY ISSUE*** ★

POPULAR AVIATION

DISCUSSIONS

AMAZING STORIES will publish in each issue a selection of letters from readers Everybody is welcome to contribute. Bouquets and brick-bats will have an equal chance. Inter-reader correspondence and controversy will be encouraged through this department. Get in with the gang and have your say.

TIMELY YARN

Sirs:

In my opinion "Judson's Annihilator" ranks first in your October, 1939 (Vol. 13, No. 10), issue of AMAZING STORIES.

I chose this story for first place because it is packed with human interest and drama-suspense intermixed with a romantic angle along with a world problem probably foremost in the minds of many people today international war.

The "Return of Satan" and "The Priestess Who Rebelled" have good qualities though of lesser degree than Judson's Annihilator. The rest of the stories seemed to revolve around some fixed plot structure that was interesting though did not seem to carry a reader interest comparable to the aforementioned three.

William Wilson,
742 Fox Street,
Denver, Colorado.

AN AUTHOR-SCIENTIST'S OPINION

Sirs:

The best story in your November issue is, in my opinion, "The Hidden Universe." I pick this story although it is only the first installment. Even so it is far superior to the other stories in the same issue, it is full of interesting characters of suspense and has a plot that is much less transparent than that of the other stories. As a guess I'd say that the "Hidden Universe" is on earth and that the "trip" consists of a transformation in size. I am looking forward to the conclusion.

Second best in the issue is "Missing: Millions in Radium," while I give third place to the "4-Sided Triangle." This story could easily have competed for first place with the Hidden Universe if the writing had proved adequate to the plot. But the style of writing is only passable, the psychological points are not well enough presented and the whole looks a bit as if an amateur had made a cup of pure gold. That plot would have needed a good novelist. Too bad!

Willy Ley,
35 33 29th Street,
Long Island City, N. Y.

FARLEY—YOU ARE LIKED!

Sirs:

The Hidden Universe contains an element of suspense of a type that is rather rare not only in science fiction stories but to all kinds of continued stories. That is the primary reason why I chose it the best in the November issue of AMAZING STORIES It does not end the installment with the hero in imminent danger of his life, as does the typical serial. To be sure, we all want to know what the plates reveal but the drive to read the next installment is something more subtle than that. I want to know, for example, what happens to the love interest between Donna Frain and Cathcart. This interest is apparent to the reader but it is not forced upon him as so often happens when a science fiction author tries to work in a little love interest. I also want to know about Malcolm Frain. We are given an inkling that he is not a kind hearted philanthropist and yet the way is left open for him to be just that. If he is not, then just what is the character of Donna going to turn out to be?

The second reason that I chose this story is that it is well written. There is a smooth flow of language that is easy and pleasant to follow. The author handles his conversation nicely. In short, it is easy to read.

Finally, I like the interplay of purposes Frain's is hidden but apparently he wants to make a good world to live in. His methods may be a little abrupt but the idea if bona fide is fine. Terro, with his purpose of undermining the project, shows that even in an apparently perfect state there are those that are dissatisfied. Of course we are not sure yet just what he is after but we have a strong belief. Freundlich has only the purpose to find out about the world about him but is rather bitter against the Frain interests because they refuse to allow him to investigate thoroughly. Cathcart of course is driven by the purpose to get out of the place. Yet his purpose is not well founded nor clear cut and therein lies the only real weakness of the story.

Victor Ketcham, Jr.,
199 E. Weber Rd.,
Columbus, Ohio.

HOK IN ATLANTIS

Sirs:

As far as I am concerned, you can have Hok, the caveman, go to plenty of other prehistoric places. He's a character that appeals to me plenty!

Tell Wellman to keep up the good work. He's a really good writer, and he can build up a picture that makes the story live in my mind.

AMAZING STORIES is tops with me!

Robert Arthur,
1263 Pasadena St.,
Santa Barbara, Calif.

The editors are glad to note that Hok is such a favorite with the readers. The caveman character is one we don't see done very often, and it's a hard one to do with any real drama.—Ed.

DECEMBER COVER

Sirs:

At last, after all these years, you've given us a space ship cover! Thanks a million. And Julian Krupa did a pretty fair job on it too! He's tops with machinery, and I don't mean to slight Robert Fuqua either. Both men share the same position.

However, now that you've done it, don't forget to do it again. We want more space ship covers. But try to make them different each time. There are lots of kinds of space ships. Now take for instance that article in your book some months ago, in which you argued for and against an "elevator type" space ship. Why not put one of your artists to work on one of those, taking off for some planet or asteroid, blasting straight up?

Anyway, take it from me, I liked your December cover, and I hope you have more like it.

William Burnett,
Box 256,
Canton, Ohio.

You aren't the only reader who liked our space ship cover. We got plenty of letters on it, and we know we rang the bell. Thanks much for your suggestion for another cover. We'll see that something is done about it.—Ed.

CARTOONS

Sirs:

You certainly are to be commended for your newest innovation, the cartoons that have been appearing in AMAZING STORIES lately. We have needed some humor in science fiction for a long time. Some of your cartoons have been side-splitting, and others have seemed to miss the boat, but I guess your artists will get onto this new type of cartoon soon. Science fiction is a bit hard to make humorous.

I laughed especially at the one in the December issue, where the big "creature" is looming out of the clouds. The cartoon was "made" by the caption. Your captions are admirable.

Keep up the good work. The whole magazine is the "nuts," and I don't mean maybe.

Arthur Cartwright,
Toledo, Ohio.

We've got a few more cartoons working which we think are really worthy of some of the high class magazines. They include some of the readers' ideas. Which might give you a hint. We'd pay for good ideas for cartoons. Maybe our readers, who know science fiction, can find the humor hidden in it?—Ed.

NELSON S. BOND

Sirs:

I want to comment on Nelson S. Bond's story, "Fugitives From Earth." Here's a yarn that hit me right on the button for convincingness and reality. That guy sure can write of the future and make it read like dramatized history!

I'd like to see more of this kind of story. In fact, I'd like to see these same characters go on to new adventures. Certainly something could be done to get them out of the terrible fix they are in now?

I don't like the idea of them just dying off, now that they've gotten out of this world of trouble. It's a dirty trick. How about it, Bond? Can't you do something about it?

John Caegl,
P. O. Box 344,
Wichita, Kansas.

You've certainly put it aptly when you said Bond could make a story read like dramatized history. We like that phrase very much. As for continuing the adventures of these characters, your editor is not averse, although just to show you Bond hasn't had the same idea, he's written a sequel which we regretfully had to turn down. But we fully expect Bond can still make something out of it, and that it'll appear back on our desk in due time. We hope so, at least.—Ed.

HIDDEN UNIVERSE A CLASSIC

Sirs:

I don't hesitate to say that Ralph Milne has added another classic to his already long list of classic science fiction. Not even his Venus stories can rival "The Hidden Universe." I enjoyed every word of it, and I admit, it was the first "infinite smallness" story that had me baffled. I leaped up on my feet when the truth dawned on me, and kicked myself all over the place.

To me, that means the yarn was plenty good!

Truman Whitney,
Rural Route No. 1,
Abrams, Wisconsin.

We agree, Truman, it was a classic.—Ed.

FANS IN AUSTRALIA

Sirs:

Although I have only been reading AMAZING STORIES since June, 1938, I have made some firm opinions regarding it. Firstly, the best cover since that date was September, '39, featuring *The Beast of the Island.* Robert Fuqua is easily your best artist, and I think it was he who did the cover for January, which I admired so much.

I am very glad to hear that Adam Link will not be electrocuted after all, for in my opinion "The

(Continued on Page 139)

He's Coming Back!

the author of the most famous character in science fiction!

★

10 years ago BUCK ROGERS made his bow to the world! This character was destined to become almost an idol in the eyes of young and old alike!

Now . . .

A Great New Character Springs Up From the Gifted Pen of:

PHIL NOWLAN

Let precedent be your guide—*Don't Miss:*

PRINCE OF MARS RETURNS

. . . the story of Dan Hanley who lands on Mars . . . meets a warrior girl . . . and fulfills a fantastic legend!

FEBRUARY ISSUE
ON SALE AT ALL NEWSSTANDS DECEMBER 20!

Trial of Adam Link, Robot" ended in the wrong strain. He must be acquitted!

The best back-cover was "Arctic Radio Farms." and here Julian S. Krupa excels all his previous work of this type. Don't lose either of them. With regard to Paul, his space-suit on the back cover of June was fairly good, but I have seen better stuff done frequently by both Krupa and Fuqua.

I would like to inform Discussionites that a third Australian science-fiction fan mag is shortly to appear. "Luna," as it has been named, will contain 12 foolscap pages, have a front-cover illustration, and only cost ten cents (postage free) in America. It will appear quarterly, and Number 1 is scheduled to appear on the first of December.

Vol Nolesworth,
11 Northumberland Street,
Clovelly, Sydney,
New South Wales,
Australia.

PROBLEM!

Sirs:

We have just finished reading the October issue of AMAZING STORIES. We especially like the time stories in it. We like to speculate on the future so we have a problem that we would like to present to the readers and get their opinion on it. We believe this is one of the problems the world will have to face if time travel comes into being.

Here is our problem: We have a time machine, and we project ourselves 100 years into the future. Their main source of power is atomic and according to them, the people in 2039, it was discovered in the year 2000 A.D. We study the process and become atomic engineers. Then we return to 1939 and we present it to the world saying we invented it. Now the problem is in the future say 2050 when students study history, what date will be given for the invention and who will be named as its inventors?

We would appreciate the readers' opinions on the subject.

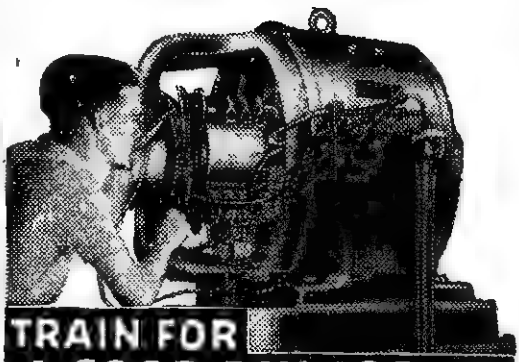
Very truly yours,
Vernon Niekirk,
417—24 St. West,
Ken Looper,
2615 Adams Ave.,
Huntington, W. Va.

Now you've started something! The argument is one that can hardly be settled, but it'll be interesting to get opinions. Your editor thinks the future would be changed to conform with the disturbance caused by the advance of the time machine and its return. But then, we've had a hundred stories based on that, all different. Your opinion is as good as anybody's.—Ed.

AMAZINGLY AMAZING?

Sirs:

Amazingly, AMAZING continues to improve. The last three issues of AMAZING, October through December, have been easily your best so far.



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Registered Patent Attorney
Dept. OA5, Adams Bldg., Washington, D. C.

Nelson S. Bond and Don Wilcox seem to be getting better and better. Bond with "The Priestess Who Rebelled" and "Fugitives From Earth"; Wilcox with "Dictator of Peace" and "Ben Gleed, King of Speed." Otto Binder never fails to satisfy, and usually his yarns do more than just that. His latest Adam Link novel should be well worth waiting for.

Wellman's "Hok Goes to Atlantis" was almost the best story in the December issue; being nosed out by Bond's terrific tale. Hok could go far in science-fiction; Wellman willing.

The only suggestion for improvement in AMAZING would be in the art work. McCauley and Duffin are fine. Not so Fuqua and the ever-present Krupa. If you could get either Wesso or Finlay, full-time, the situation would be remedied almost immediately.

So we're to get FANTASTIC ADVENTURES once a month hereafter. Good!

Stanley Wells,
235 Noe Street,
San Francisco, Calif.

Your editors don't think it's so amazing. We're doing what we can to keep up our improvement. Our readers don't expect AMAZING STORIES to stand still, and it won't.—Ed.

COMMON ADVENTURE YARNS

Sirs:

I think the only "Hall of Fame" story you published so far was "The Strange Flight of Richard Clayton," yet in the old days there were such masterpieces as "The Ship of Ishtar," "The Time Machine," "Moon Pool" and the Skylark Series. I am quite sure if less space were given to common adventure yarns you would turn out more stories such as these. The laws of averages and authors would prove it. So please make FANTASTIC ADVENTURES live up to the build-up you gave it, "The best in science-fiction!"

The question of covers now arises (?). Why in heaven's name must you plaster titles and authors all over the cover. I wish you would publish only one title and its author, and it should be the story from which the cover painting is depicted. You know pretty well that anyone going to a magazine stand to buy one of your scientifiction mags knows what he wants and what he should expect from two reputable magazines.

Another thing, why must human beings get the spotlight on *all* of your covers? A ship going through space is much more attractive than a man being armed with a gun, sword or bludgeon. Variety of scenery is what most fans want.

Harold G. Schaeffer,
1320 Fulton Ave.,
New York City.

You've brought up a point that brings your editor to a few rather pointed observations. First, you mention masterpieces. And you quote a few stories. Now, just consider these stories seriously. They are *common adventure yarns.* Ship of Ishtar *was pure adventure, in a fantastic world.* Moon Pool

was packed with adventure, no science. The exception was The Time Machine. *It wasn't science, and it wasn't adventure. It was what I'd call, today, if I saw it on my desk, a "travelogue." The Skylark stories were pure adventure, plus travelogue, plus super-science (copper bars of tremendous size, driving space ships at incredible speeds, and human beings performing feats of the gods). Sometimes your editor wonders what the fans would really say about these masterpieces, if they were to read them in Amazing Stories today, as original, unpublished works?*

Covers? Your point again has another viewpoint. We don't know that anyone going to the newsstand will know what he wants. Our old readers, yes, but not prospective readers. When you sell something, you've got to tell the buyer what he's getting. Does any other magazine run covers without captions? Why not? The answer is obvious.

The human being on a cover is a selling point. It is a well known fact that a reader places himself in the position of the hero, subconsciously, when he reads the story. That's why he enjoys a pulp fiction story. He isn't reading for esthetic reasons. He's out for a thrill. And so, a human being on the cover is good. Space ships? What about our December cover?

You see, we are giving you what you want, whenever we can. Let's hear from you again. Your letters give us what we need in Discussions.—Ed.

READERS!

Take advantage of AMAZING STORIES' discussions column and of the correspondence corner, to air your views on science fiction and to gain pen pals, or trade back issues, or offer to buy or sell them. These departments are your departments, and you are free to use them in a friendly fashion. Your editor is just "one of the gang" and he'll be glad to take part.

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Angus Taylor, 6 Rothley Grove, Seaton Delaval, Northumberland, England, wants to correspond with a girl of her own age, 16, anywhere in the U.S.A., who is interested in drawing and sports. . . . Stella Kowalcik, 115-44-149 St., South Ozone Park, N. Y., wants pen pals, and is interested in

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30x4.50-21	2.40	1.15	32x4	2.95	1.25	30x5	3.65	1.65
28x4.75-19	2.45	1.25	33x4	2.95	1.25	33x5	3.75	1.75
29x4.75-20	2.50	1.25	34x4	3.25	1.35	35x5	3.95	1.75
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31x5.25-21	3.25	1.35	34x5	4.25	2.25			
5.50-17	3.35	1.40	32x6	7.95	2.95	36x8	11.45	4.95
28x5.50-18	3.35	1.40	33x6	7.95	4.45	40x8	13.25	4.95
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6.00-17	3.40	1.40	Size	Tires	Tubes	Size	Tires	Tubes
30x6.00-18	3.40	1.40	6.00-20	$3.75	$1.65	7.50-20	$6.95	$3.75
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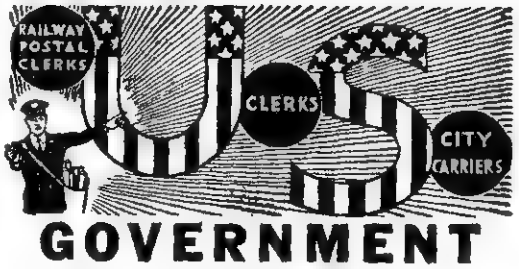

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QUIZ ANSWERS

(Quiz on page 131)

A MATTER OF CHOICE

1—Two 3—Four 5—Four 7—Two
2—Three 4—Two 6—One 8—One or Three
9—One 10—Two

BRAIN WORK

1—One ergon is not the resistance of two dynes over a distance of one centimeter and a laryngoscope is an instrument for examining the larynx.

2—A zygoscope is the union of two gametics and cretinism is a peculiar endemic disease especially common in Switzerland.

3—Sodium chloride is common table salt and the heaviest element is uranium.

4—The sum of the angles of a triangle do not equal 360 degrees and it is impossible to find the square root of a negative number.

5—Water is the combination of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen and there are two incisors in the human mouth.

MATCH THESE!

1—Constellations
1—B; 2—D; 3—A; 4—E; 5—C
2—"Ologies"
1—E; 2—A; 3—B; 4—C; 5—D
3—Elements
1—C; 2—D; 3—A; 4—E; 5—B
4—"Meters"
1—D; 2—E; 3—A; 4—B; 5—C
5—Alphabetical Science
1—E; 2—D; 3—A; 4—B; 5—C

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... no time now to lose! He was in the water like a seal ... swimming below the surface toward the powerful Messerschmitt! Barney swung lightly in the surface swell, then cautiously climbed the pontoon, and was in the pilot's cockpit in a flash ... crouching so he could not be seen by his enemies aboard the *Posen!* Suddenly there was a sharp cry aboard the ship: "The plane! She's broken loose!" A shiver raced through Barney ... his heart pumped like a trip-hammer! He was risking everything on this one bold play ... and if that failed ... then once again lovely Pahua would be the base for ruthless war pirates ... and the sunken treasure of 1918 would be used to turn the peaceful South Seas into a new theatre of naval warfare! Here is a glamorous, exciting novel of the South Seas! Don't fail to read this dynamic story of modern raiders and sunken treasure ...

The Golden Cache of Pahua Cove

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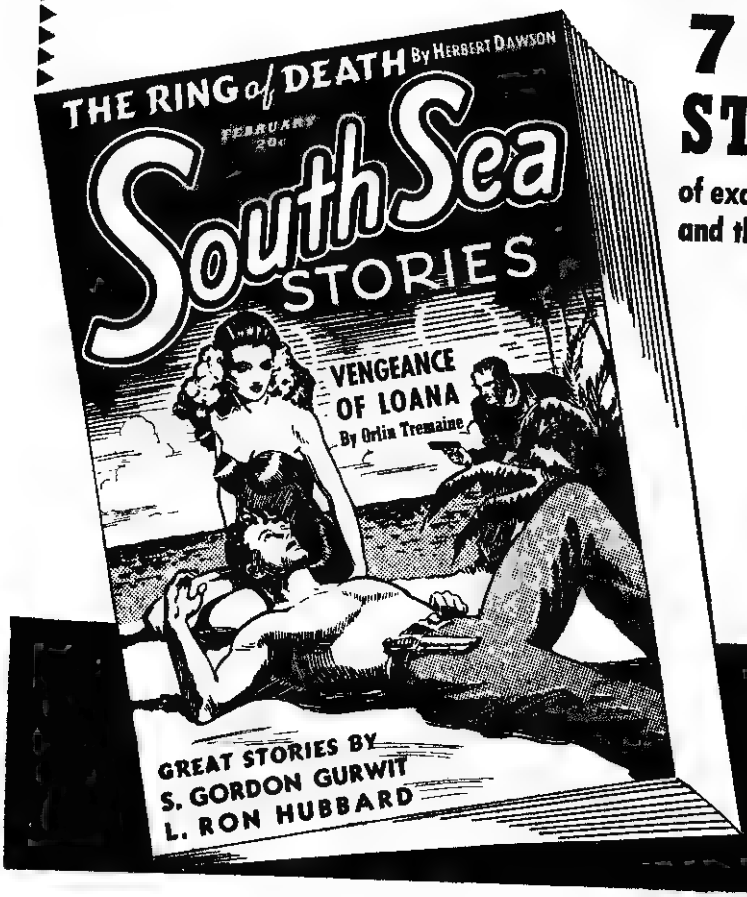

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Nazi Bombers Over Scotland

Swiftly the Nazi bomber roared toward its objective, the Spitfire in close pursuit! Whitey Trail dove grimly down . . . his motor thundering a promise of death to the bomber! In a moment the great bridge below would be blown to bits, unless Trail stopped the Nazi raider! Down . . . down . . . down, like a flashing comet . . . then Whitey Trail sobbed, broke, whirled the plane viciously away. Before his eyes loomed the upthrust pylons of the bridge. Pylons! Always pylons! Trail couldn't stand pylons. They made him remember something . . . something that threw utter terror into his soul! An unreasoning, resistless terror that made a coward of him. Dimly through his fear-clouded brain he heard the roar of exploding bombs. The Nazi bomber had reached his objective! And he, Whitey Trail, could have prevented it. Why hadn't he? Why did he go into a blue funk at the mere sight of the pylons? Don't fail to read the answer in

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February Issue

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EVOLUTION GONE MAD!

By HENRY GADE

(SEE BACK COVER PAINTING BY H. M. DUFFIN)

Evolution is a strange thing, somehow governed by cosmic rays, and it could easily be unbalanced, causing it to run riot with strange effects

THE earth is a magnet. Like any other magnet, it is surrounded by a magnetic field. No more than a compass is needed to demonstrate the lines of force running between its two poles.

What would happen if that magnetic field failed?

The course of evolution would be turned back two hundred million years! Great thunder-lizards would walk the earth again. Flying reptiles would wing their huge bodies over towering fern fronds. Gigantic insects would fight for supremacy in the weird light of a world lashed by titanic forces.

And mankind, unless it fled from those forces, would become a new race of nightmare monsters!

It seems impossible, of course, that anywhere in the universe there exists a single power capable of producing those cataclysmic effects. Yet it is with us all the time and all around us—in the eight hundred million billion cosmic rays which strike the earth every second with a thousand times the voltage of lightning!

Why don't we suffer any ill effects from that merciless bombardment now? It amounts to about thirty shots at every human body each second. Considering that there are some thousand trillion trillion atoms in the average body, it seems that there is no dearth of targets. Some damage should be done.

But, though we seem solid enough, those atoms are as far apart as island universes! Even their planetary electrons are separated from each other and the central nucleus by distances proportionally as great as those between members of the solar system. The chances of a direct hit are infinitesimal. The projectiles go straight through us without touching us!

A few, perhaps, do hit. It is believed that some freaks—five legged calves, ten-fingered children—are the result of damage done to the parental germ plasm by cosmic rays. Mutations are produced by changes in the genes, the carriers of heredity. In this way, experimenting on flies with X-rays, scientists have created hundreds of new species and thousands of freakish variations. But such cases would be as nothing compared to what we would have if the earth's magnetic field were to weaken or fail.

That magnetic field is our protection against the unbridled forces of the universe! It acts as a shield, repulsing by far the greater part of the cosmic radiation raining in on the earth from some unknown source in space. Only cosmic rays of energy greater than 200,000,000 electron volts are able to penetrate it.

The amount that gets through may seem, from the figure given, a heavy deluge. But if the potential of the field were to drop, if the shield let in the far greater quantity of lower energy rays, a veritable cloudburst of malignant radiation would descend upon us!

No longer will it be a matter of random hits. That solid blanket will miss nothing!

It will recreate the conditions controlling evolution two hundred million years ago, make over every life form developed since! Lion-sized ants, the highest order of modern insects, will vie with Tyrannosaurus Rex, king of the dinosaurs. Man, changed unrecognizably, will no longer be Ruler of Earth!

And the earth itself will be strangely altered.

But long before these indirect consequences manifested themselves, we would have swifter evidence of the disastrous effects of cosmic radiation. Rank vegetation would push up through every crack, tearing sidewalks and streets apart. It would reach up avidly and take hold in every crevice of buildings. Cities would become steaming, impassable jungles!

Swiftly, then, will the damage be done to men. Even as they scurry in panic at the first announcement of the catastrophe which Geiger counters, instruments for measuring quantity and intensity of cosmic rays, have just discovered, the insidious malignant changes will be working in their bodies!

Of those changes only this need be said: *No two men will be alike—and none will any longer be a human being.*

Is there no escape? Perhaps—but only perhaps.

Mankind might escape, if awakened to the danger early enough, by burrowing deep into the earth. Cosmic rays can penetrate thirty feet of lead, more than a hundred feet of solid rock!

We may be at the threshold of the ultimate catastrophe—if the earth's magnetic field fails!

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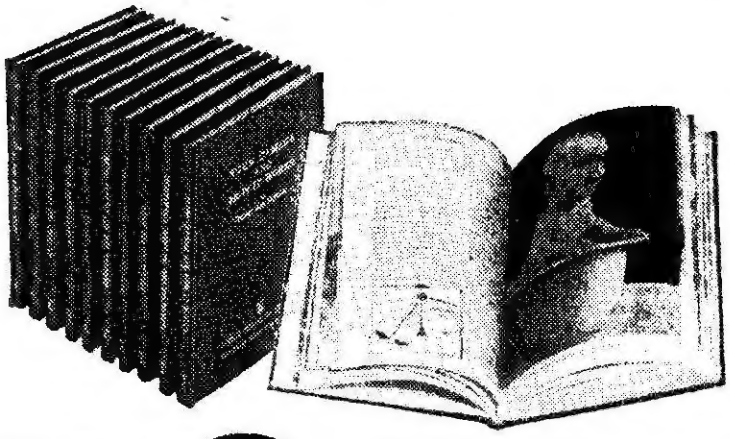

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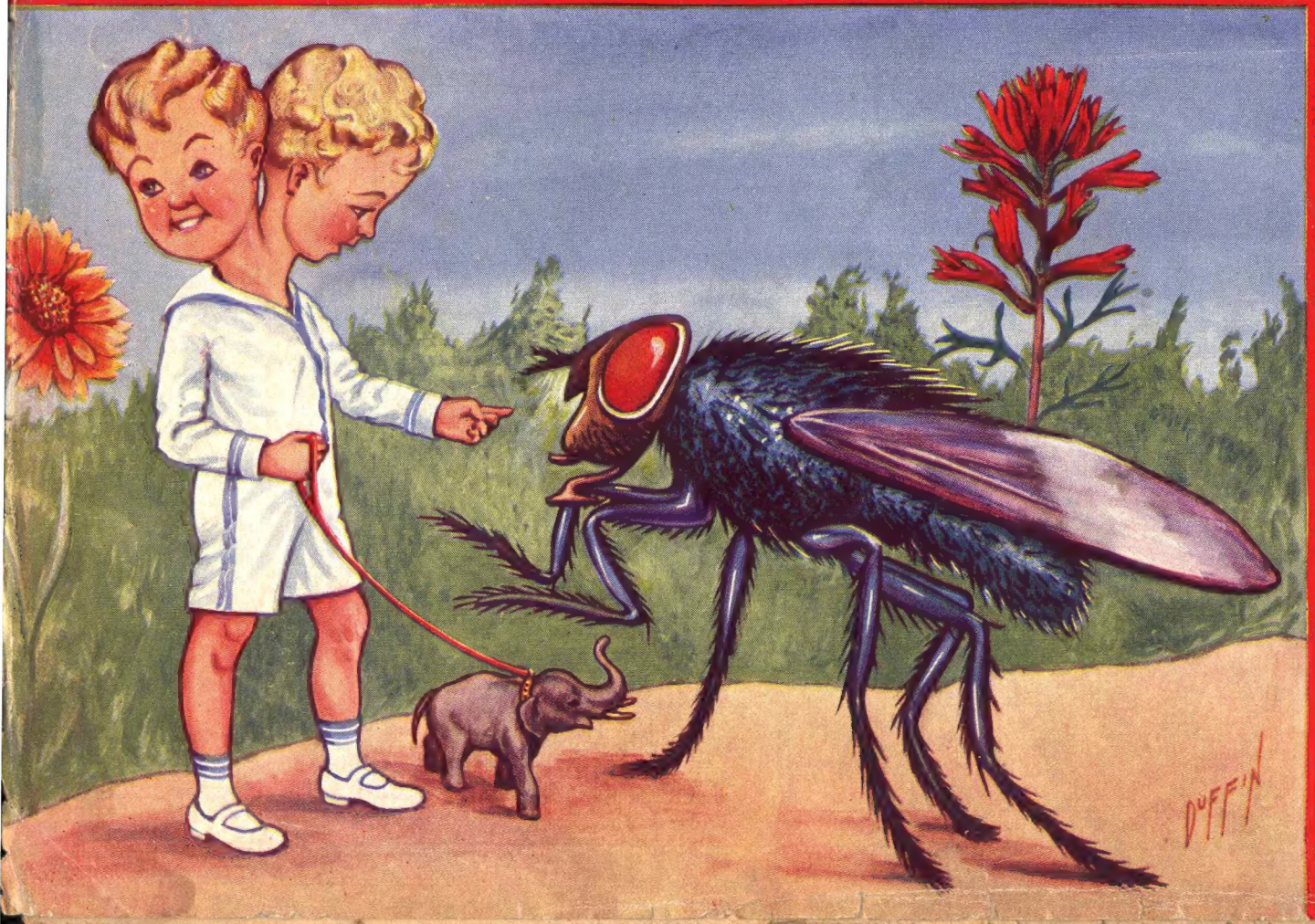
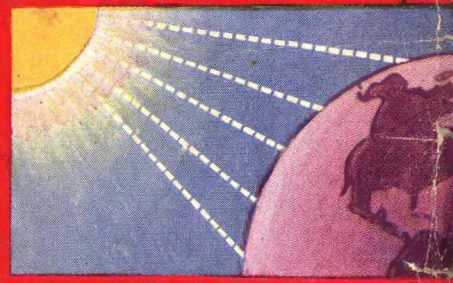
EVOLUTION GONE MAD!

Cosmic rays could easily alter the usual course of evolution.

During Earth's development, life on its surface has developed along a more or less steady upward path of evolution. There have been mutations which have died out, many species proving impractical and therefore disappearing. Evolution is caused, science says, by cosmic rays, bombarding Earth from outer space. They are capable of causing changes in the chromosomes, and although the result is usually an advancement, sometimes there is a throwback. If, by some simple and possible means, such as a lessening of Earth's magnetic field, which now deflects most of the cosmic rays, they came through in great strength, evolution would go mad. (See page 145 for complete details.)



The Earth's magnetic field now checks most of the cosmic rays.



If it disappeared, they would stream through in full force.

Man's cities would totter as vegetation ran completely riot.

Freakish, haphazard mutations such as this walking fish would appear